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Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NWS) 1989

A Demographic and Employment Profile Of Perishable Crop Farm Workers



Office of Program Economics
Research Report No. 2

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy

November 1991



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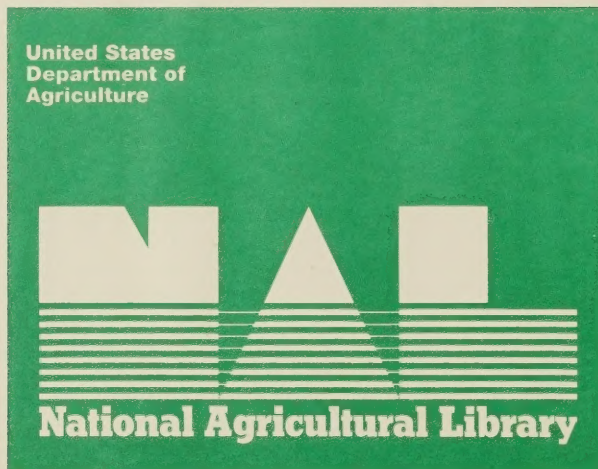
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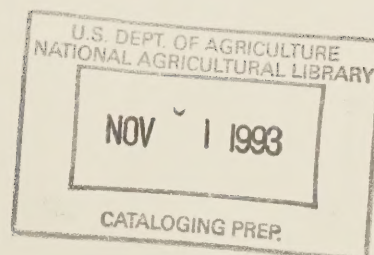


Office of Program Economics
Research Report No. 2

U.S. Department of Labor
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November 1991



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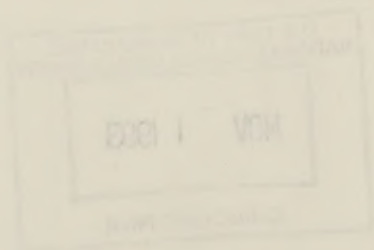


TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

Executive Summary	i
-------------------------	---

Introduction	1
--------------------	---

SECTION I: CHARACTERISTICS OF SAS WORKERS

Chapter 1: Demographic Profile	11
--------------------------------------	----

Chapter 2: Legal Status	23
-------------------------------	----

Chapter 3: Literacy, Schooling and English Skills	31
---	----

Chapter 4: Family Residence and Work Site Household Composition	37
--	----

Chapter 5: Assets and Use of Government Programs	45
--	----

SECTION II: EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS AND JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Chapter 6: Employment History and Labor Supply	51
--	----

Chapter 7: SAS Employment	57
---------------------------------	----

Chapter 8: Non-SAS Employment	67
-------------------------------------	----

Chapter 9: Non-Work Periods and Periods Spent Abroad	73
--	----

SECTION III: REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN SAS WORKERS AND SAS WORK

Chapter 10: Regional Differences in SAS Worker Characteristics	81
--	----

Chapter 11: Regional Differences in SAS Jobs	87
--	----

Appendix: Statistical Procedures	91
--	----

LIST OF GRAPHICS

FIGURES

page

1.1	Profile of Individual Performing SAS Work	12
1.2	Age Distribution of All SAS Workers	13
1.3	Gender of All SAS Workers	14
1.4	Marital Status and Gender of All SAS Workers	15
1.5	Ethnicity and Place of Birth of All SAS Workers	17
1.6	Hispanic Origins of All SAS Workers	19
1.7	Years in the United States for Foreign-Born SAS Workers	21
2.1	Legal Status of All SAS Workers	26
2.2	Legal Status by Place of Birth of All SAS Workers	27
2.3	Workers in the United States Five or More Years for Foreign-Born SAS Workers	28
2.4	IRCA Legalization by Type for SAS Workers Who Applied	30
3.1	Native Language of all SAS Workers	32
3.2	Level of Education by Language Sub-Groups for All SAS Workers	34
3.3	Distribution of Level of Education of All SAS Workers	36
4.1	Family Type by Accompanied for All SAS Workers	39
4.2	Work Site Family Residence by Gender for All SAS Workers	41
4.3	Family Residence by Place of Birth for All SAS Workers	42
4.4	Number of Children Residing with Worker for Parent SAS Workers	43
5.1	Needs-Based Services by Type for All SAS Workers	47
5.2	Contribution-Based Services by Type for All SAS Workers	48
6.1	Time Allocation of the Average SAS Worker	52
7.1	SAS Crop Breakdown for All SAS Workers	58
7.2	SAS Task Breakdown for All SAS Workers	59
7.3	Type of Employer for All SAS Workers	60

page

7.4	Benefits by Type for All SAS Workers	64
7.5	Facilities at Work Site by Type for All SAS Workers	65
8.1	Length of Time in Non-SAS Work for All SAS Workers	68
8.2	Non-SAS Employment by Area for SAS Workers Who Took Non-SAS Work	70
9.1	Total Time Spent Not Working in the United States and Abroad for All SAS Workers	75
9.2	Length of Time Not Working in the United States for All SAS Workers	77
9.3	Length of Time Abroad for All SAS Workers	78
10.1	SAS Work by Region for All SAS Workers	84
11.1	Non-SAS Employment by Region for All SAS Workers	89

TABLES

1.1	Ethnicity of SAS Workers	16
10.1	Regional Definitions	82
A.1	Confidence Intervals for Continuous Variables	93

MAPS

Map 1:	Sampled Counties	6
Map 2:	Agricultural Regions	7
Map 3:	NAWS Regions	83

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This report provides information on the characteristics and work patterns of U.S. agricultural workers performing Seasonal Agricultural Services (SAS) during fiscal year 1989 (October 1, 1988 - September 31, 1989). The information presented was gathered during more than 2,500 personal interviews with SAS workers conducted by the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) during fiscal year 1989.

As part of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Labor are charged annually with determining if there is a shortage of SAS workers. To respond to this legislative requirement, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) contracted Aguirre International to conduct the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS). The NAWS collects comprehensive job history information on SAS workers to estimate fluctuations in the labor supply. Only farm workers employed in SAS labor are interviewed for the NAWS.

In fiscal year 1989, 2,526 randomly selected SAS workers were interviewed. To ensure regional coverage, the NAWS uses site area sampling to obtain a nationally representative cross section of SAS workers. To ensure seasonal sensitivity, four six- to ten-week cycles were conducted. One cycle began in October 1988, one in January 1989, one in April 1989, and one in July 1989. Site selection and interview allocations were proportional to seasonal payroll size.

Employer names were obtained from various government sources, and a random sample of SAS employers was generated for each of the selected sites. NAWS Regional Coordinators contact selected employers to obtain access to the work site.

Interviewers visited the work site and asked a random sample of workers to participate. Interviews were conducted in one of five languages and took place at the worker's home or at worker selected locations.

The report is divided into three sections. Section I covers characteristics of SAS workers; Section II reviews SAS workers' patterns of employment; and Section III presents some regional differences among SAS workers and SAS work. The major findings for each section are summarized below.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAS WORKERS:

- The SAS labor force is comprised mainly of young workers, men, Hispanics and immigrants.
- Most SAS workers have work authorization, but a small minority are unauthorized. Over one-third of the foreign-born SAS workers applied for legalization through IRCA programs.
- Most SAS workers have low levels of education. More than one-half of SAS workers have completed eight or fewer years of formal education. Spanish is the primary language for almost two out of three SAS workers.
- The majority of SAS workers are married and/or have children. More than two in five SAS workers live away from their families while performing SAS work. Men and foreign-born workers are most likely to be living away from their families.
- One-fifth of SAS workers are recipients of needs-based social services. Food Stamps is the type of assistance most often received.

PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT

- SAS workers average more than one-half of the year doing SAS work. Most SAS workers would be willing to do more farm work, but most are not willing to migrate in search of additional SAS work.
- Almost three-fourths of SAS workers plan to continue doing farm work indefinitely unless they become physically unable to work. Among those intending to leave farm work, the most common reason given is dissatisfaction with the terms of employment. The job factors considered most important in sustaining a SAS worker's willingness to engage in farm work are wages, benefits and job stability.
- Over three-fourths of SAS workers work in fruits, nuts or vegetables. Almost one-third of SAS workers are engaged in harvesting. Almost nine out of ten are employed directly by the producer. Farm labor contractors employ most of the rest.
- SAS workers report that most SAS jobs pay relatively low wages and have relatively few benefits. Substandard working conditions continue to prevail in some sectors of farm work. SAS workers are paid mostly by the hour and have a median hourly wage of \$4.50. Almost one-half of SAS workers report that they are covered by Unemployment Insurance. Over one-fourth of SAS workers still lack access to basic sanitary facilities at the work site.
- About three in ten SAS workers hold a non-SAS job at some point in time during a one-year period. More than one-third of those with non-SAS jobs perform non-SAS labor for fewer than four months out of the year. Most non-SAS work is in the areas of other agriculture, construction, mechanical trades, food service and manufacturing.
- Many SAS workers who perform non-farm labor prefer it to farm labor.

- Most SAS workers spend some time not working in the United States. Slightly more than one-fifth of SAS workers spend part of the year abroad.
- The majority of SAS workers who reside in the United States while not working do not receive Unemployment Insurance benefits.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

- The number of women relative to men performing SAS work is higher in the Midwest than in the rest of the country.
- Foreign-born SAS workers make up most of the SAS labor force in all regions except the Midwest and the Northeast.
- The Northeast and the Southeast have the highest proportion of workers who do not have their families at the work site.
- SAS jobs in fruits and nuts are most common in the Northwest, the Southwest, and the Northeast. Vegetable SAS jobs are more predominant in the Southeast, Midwest and Western Plains.
- The Southeast and the Northeast have the highest concentrations of harvesting SAS jobs and the lowest frequency of semi-skilled jobs.
- The highest concentration of SAS workers employed by farm labor contractors is in the Southeast.
- According to respondents, SAS employees in the Southeast are least likely to be covered by Workers' Compensation.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The series *Findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey* is intended to provide the public with information on the characteristics and work patterns of seasonal agricultural workers. Its aim is to provide a basic reference for individuals needing current national statistics on seasonal farm workers. It is hoped that this report will be useful to policy makers, researchers, agricultural employers, employer organizations, and groups providing services to seasonal farm workers.

The report provides an overview of the data collected by the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS). It includes responses of 2,526 Seasonal Agricultural Services (SAS) workers interviewed by the NAWS during fiscal year 1989. The text and tables in this report depict the frequencies with which these SAS workers responded to specific interview questions. For example, the report details what percentage of the individuals were married, what percentage were single and what percentage were divorced, separated or widowed. In some policy areas, data have been broken down further by important subgroups of the population. For example, English language proficiency is reported by country of origin. More in-depth analysis of the NAWS data will be presented through occasional reports on specific topics.

These findings display information for individual respondents in the NAWS regardless of how much SAS work they perform. If we were to report our results in terms of hours worked rather than in terms of percent of individuals, certain groups would become more important contributors to the SAS labor force. Some important demographic groups slighted by this approach are men, participants in the Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) authorization program, and immigrants from Latin

America. Each of these groups works proportionately more hours than the percent of the labor force they represent.

A similar report will be produced annually, contingent on continued funding for the NAWS. This report covers interviews from fiscal year 1989, the first year of the NAWS. The 1990 report was published before the 1989 report in order to make the most recent information available as soon as possible.

Interested individuals are invited to make comments and suggestions for improving the report. Communication should be directed to Rick Mines, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-2114, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS REPORT

The report is divided into three sections. Section I provides national level information on the personal characteristics of seasonal agricultural workers. It covers legal status, schooling, language proficiency and literacy, family residence and U.S. household composition, income and use of government programs.

Section II provides information on employment patterns and job characteristics at the national level. It covers employment history and labor supply, characteristics and patterns of SAS employment, characteristics and patterns of non-SAS employment, and characteristics and patterns of non-work periods and periods spent abroad.

Section III provides information on regional differences in worker characteristics, job characteristics and employment patterns.

THE SURVEY

The NAWS is a national survey of perishable crop field workers that has been commissioned by the Department of Labor (DOL) in response to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). IRCA requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Labor to determine annually if there is a shortage of SAS workers. The Secretaries also must identify how seasonal agricultural wages and working conditions have changed since the passage of IRCA.

To respond to DOL's legislative needs, the NAWS collects a variety of data from SAS workers. Data from an extensive work history are used to measure changes in SAS labor supplied by employed SAS workers. The NAWS also collects basic demographic information, as well as information on legal status, education, family size and household composition. To monitor wages and working conditions, the NAWS asks workers a series of questions about their current SAS job. In addition, the NAWS asks workers about non-SAS work, non-work periods and time spent abroad.

The NAWS only interviews workers currently performing SAS work, and it should be remembered that the USDA has defined SAS quite broadly. SAS crops include the vast majority of nursery products, cash grains, and field crops, in addition to all fruits and vegetables. SAS work does not include livestock or poultry production, nor does it include work in silage or other crop activities dedicated exclusively to producing animal fodder. The NAWS interviews all field workers involved in SAS crops even though they may work for the same employer year-round. The definition of field work, of course, excludes secretaries and mechanics who work for SAS employers. However, field packers, supervisors and all other field workers are included.

The NAWS does not sample unemployed agricultural workers. Workers can only be interviewed for the NAWS when they are actively employed in SAS work.

METHODOLOGY

Each year, the NAWS conducts personal interviews with over 2,000 randomly selected U.S. SAS workers. The sample is designed to be sensitive to seasonal and regional fluctuations in the amount of SAS work performed. The NAWS uses site area sampling to obtain a nationally representative sample of SAS workers while at the same time containing travel costs. A sample of sixty counties covering twenty-five states was selected (see map 1). The sixty counties were chosen to represent twelve distinct agricultural regions (see map 2). No fewer than four counties were selected for each region.

To ensure that data collection is sensitive to seasonal fluctuations in the agricultural work force, interviewing cycles lasting six to ten weeks are conducted four times during the fiscal year: one cycle began in October of 1988, one in January of 1989, one in April of 1989, and one in July of 1989. The number of interviews conducted during a cycle was proportionate to the amount of SAS activity at that time of the year.

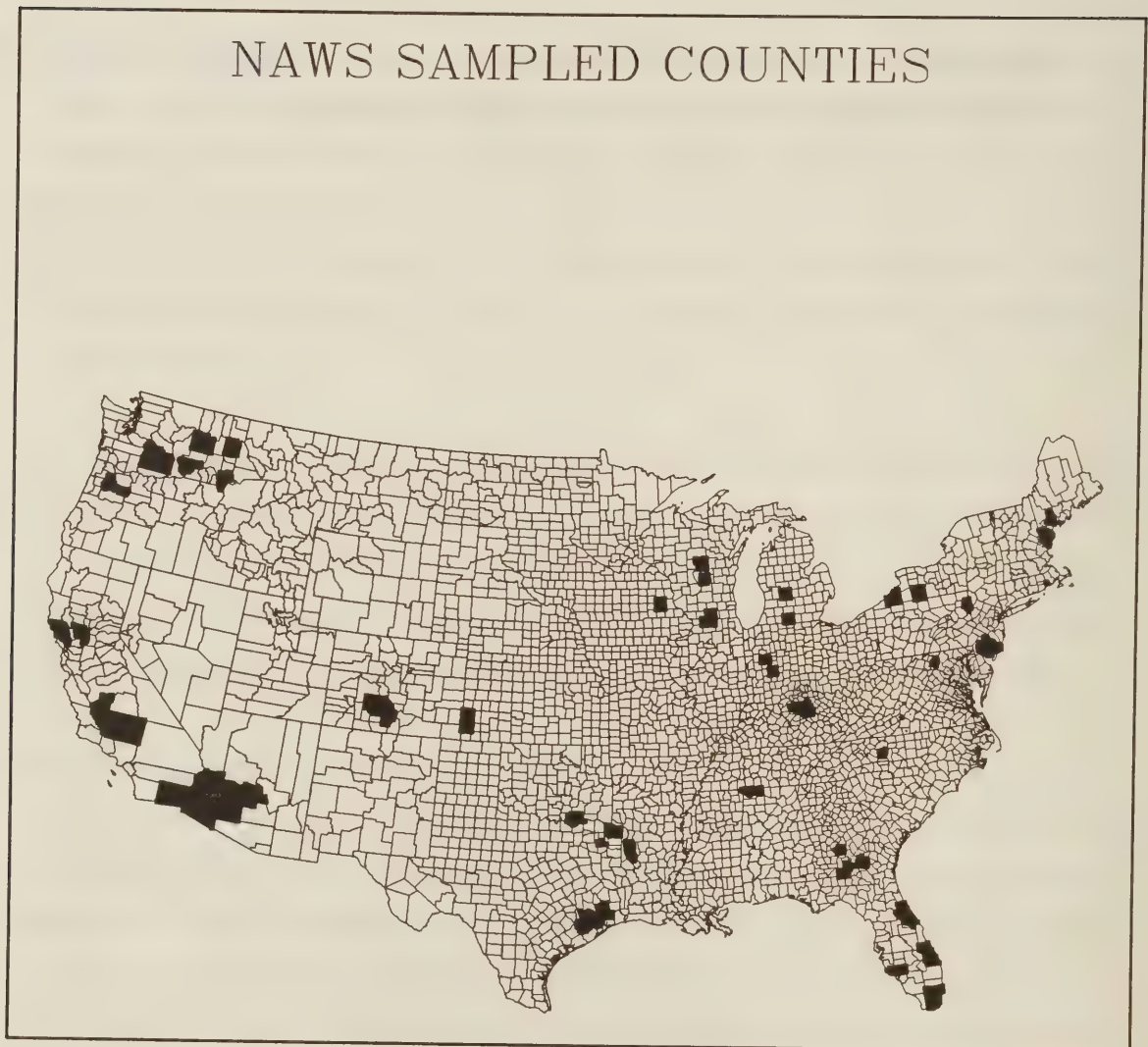
Multi-stage sampling is used to select SAS workers for each cycle. For each three-month cycle, approximately thirty of the sixty counties are selected randomly as interviewing sites. Site selection is sensitive to the size of the seasonal agricultural payroll. A random sample of SAS employers is generated for each of the selected county sites. Employer names are obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Agricultural Soil and Conservation Service, Farm Labor Contractor Registration lists and other sources.

NAWS Regional Coordinators contact the selected employers, explain the purpose of the survey and obtain access to the work site in order to schedule interviews. Interviewers then go to the farm, ranch or nursery, explain the purpose of the survey to the workers, and ask a random sample of them to participate. Interviews then are

conducted in the SAS worker's home or at another location of the SAS worker's choice.

This report includes data from 2,526 personal interviews which were conducted by the NAWS between October 1, 1988 and September 30, 1989.

MAP 1



MAP 2

AGRICULTURAL REGIONS



SECTION I: CHARACTERISTICS OF SAS WORKERS

CHAPTER 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports basic demographic characteristics of SAS workers. It covers age, gender and marital status as well as national origin and ethnicity.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Most SAS workers are:

- Young (65%). Almost two-thirds of SAS workers are under thirty-five years of age.
- Male (75%). Three-fourth of SAS workers are men.
- Married (54%). Over one-half of SAS workers are married.
- Foreign-born (62%). Almost two-thirds of SAS workers are foreign-born. The majority (54%) of workers have been in the United States eight years or longer.
- Hispanic (77%). Over three-fourths of SAS workers are of Hispanic origin.

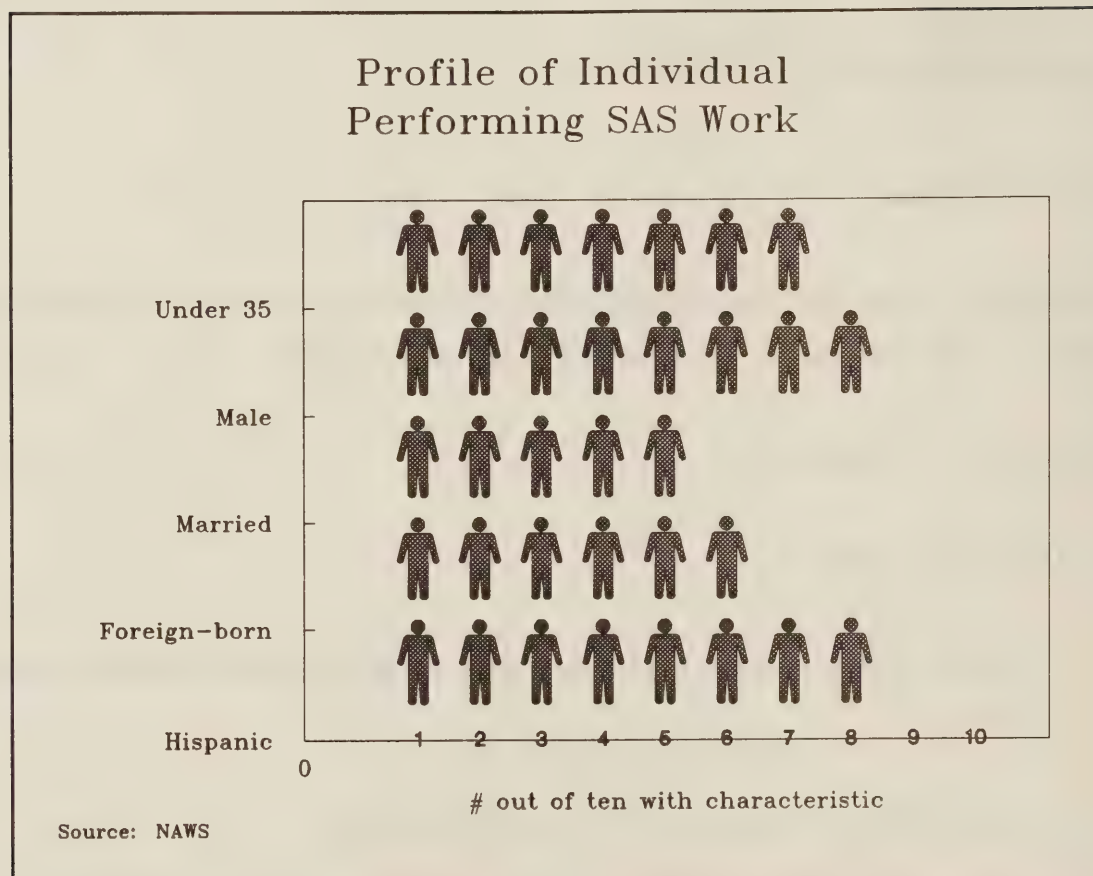


Figure 1.1 shows that most SAS workers are under 35 years old, male, married, foreign-born and Hispanic.

AGE AND GENDER

Most SAS workers are young. The median age is thirty years. Very few SAS workers are under the age of eighteen (4%). Most (61%) SAS workers are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four years. Another 18% of SAS workers are between thirty-five and forty-four years old, and 17% are over the age of forty-four.

Age varies by ethnic origin. Asians, whose median age is forty-three, tend to be older than other SAS workers. Mexicans, on the other hand, are the youngest SAS workers with a median age of twenty-eight years. The median age of U.S.-born African-

Americans is thirty-three years and the median age of Non-Mexican-born Latin Americans is thirty-two. The median ages of U.S.-born whites (30) and U.S.-born Hispanics (30) are similar to the median age for the sample (30).

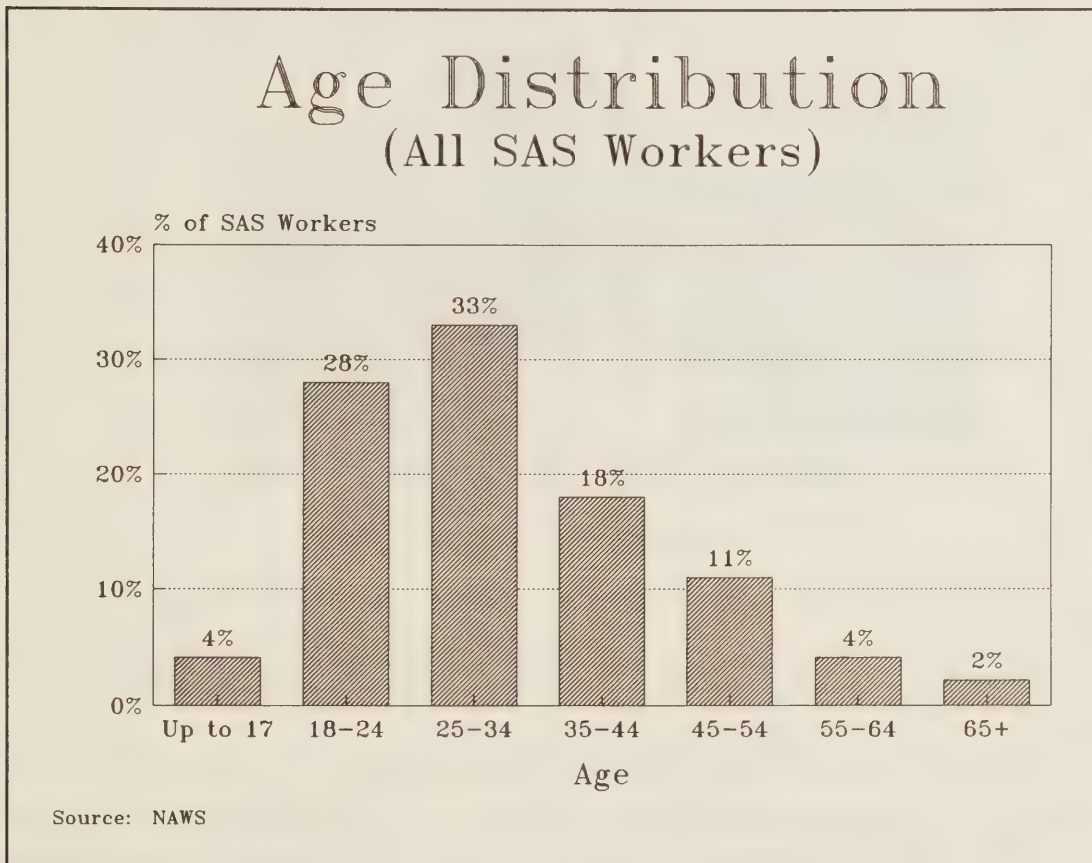


Figure 1.2 shows that most SAS workers are young.

Most seasonal SAS workers are men (75%).

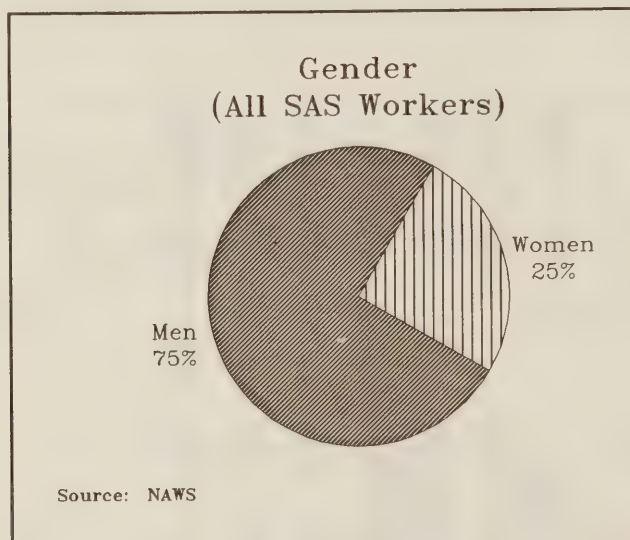


Figure 1.3 shows that men perform most SAS work

More than one-half (54%) of SAS workers are married.¹ Seven percent of SAS workers are separated, divorced or widowed, and 39% have never been married, amounting to a total of 46% who are single. The likelihood of being married is approximately equal across gender (54% for males vs. 53% for females).

¹ For the purposes of the NAWS, the term married includes both common-law and legal marriages.

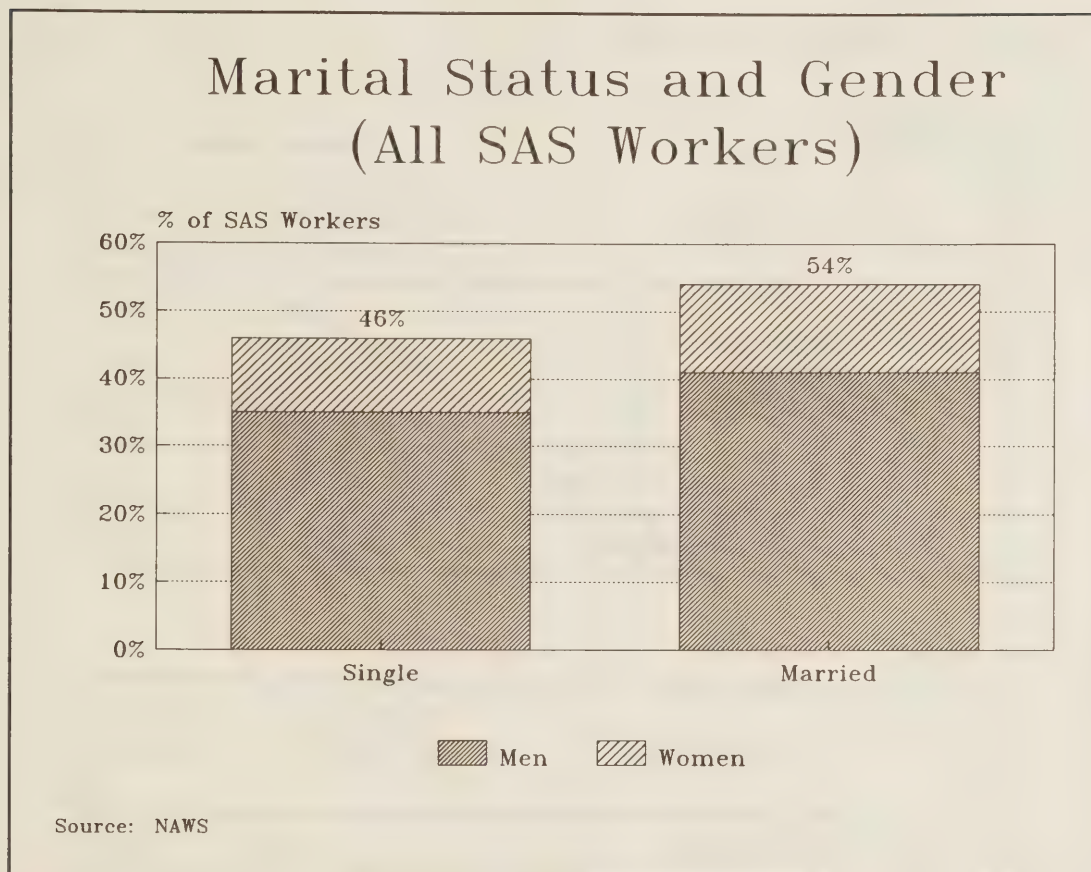


Figure 1.4 illustrates that most SAS workers are married.

ETHNICITY AND PLACE OF BIRTH

U.S. seasonal agricultural employers depend heavily on foreign workers; 62% of SAS workers are foreign-born and 38% are U.S.-born. Over one-half (56%) of SAS workers (or 92% of all foreign-born SAS workers) are Mexican. A small percentage of SAS workers are from other countries in Latin America (4%), Asia (1%), and the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean (1%).

Table 1.1 Ethnicity of SAS Workers

FOREIGN-BORN

ETHNICITY	% OF FOREIGN- BORN	% OF TOTAL
Mexican	92%	56%
Other Latin	5%	4%
Asian	2%	1%
Non-Spanish Speaking Caribbean	1%	1%
TOTAL FOREIGN-BORN	100%	62%

U.S.-BORN

ETHNICITY	% OF U.S.- BORN	% OF TOTAL
Whites (non-Hispanic)	47%	18%
Hispanics	44%	16%
African-Americans (non-Hispanic)	7%	3%
Other	2%	1%
TOTAL U.S.-BORN	100%	38%

TOTAL	100%	100%
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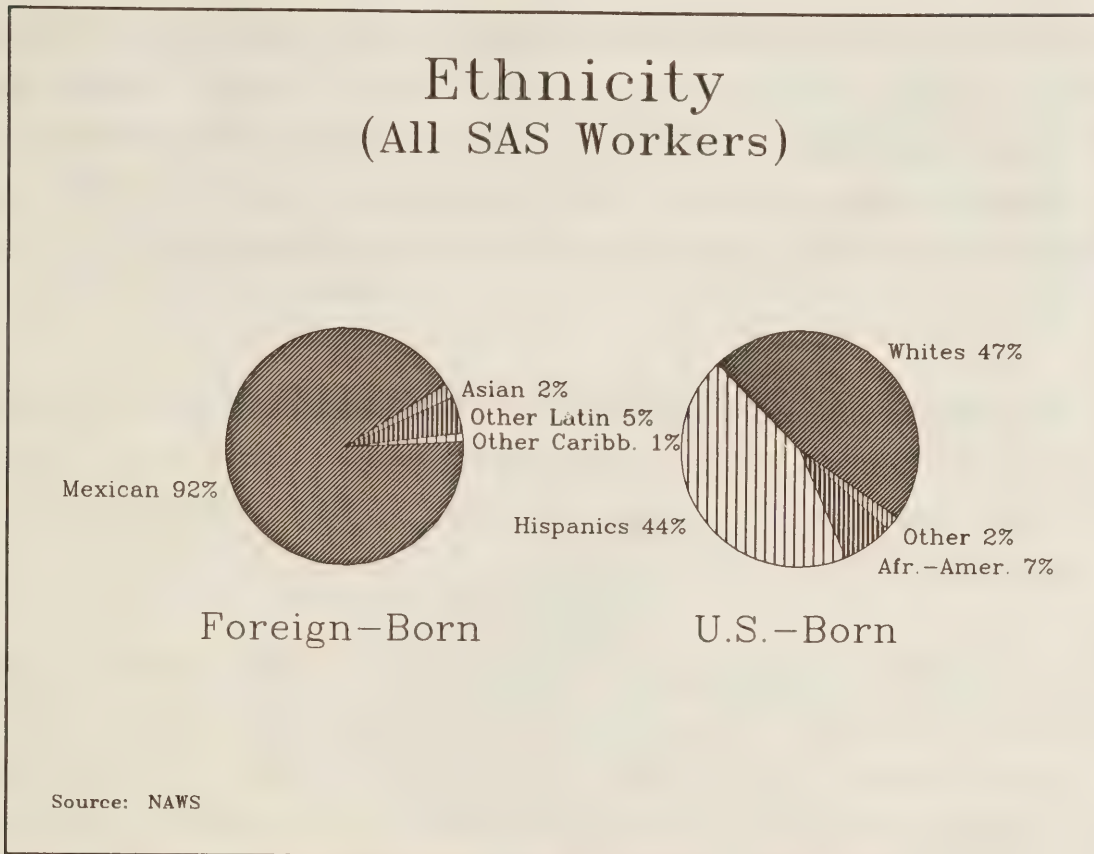


Figure 1.5 shows most SAS workers are members of a minority group.

Using ethnicity labels is highly sensitive. It involves making somewhat arbitrary divisions in a multi-dimensional continuum of identification which is based on cultural heritage, nationality and racial background. As shall be shown, self-identification, societal identification and the sociologist's identification of ethnicity can vary. In this report, we describe major national, cultural, and linguistic differences among U.S. SAS workers that are useful in understanding seasonal labor supply.

In asking about ethnicity, originally the NAWS attempted to use standard questions about racial identity and Hispanic origin that would conform to U.S.

Census definitions and allow for comparison to other surveys. Based on advice and experience, the NAWS questions were modified slightly. Despite these changes, many SAS workers still found it difficult to identify themselves using the categories in these questions. This is probably because many SAS workers come from countries where race and ethnicity are defined differently than in the United States.

The question on Hispanic-origin asks workers to identify themselves as Mexican-American, Mexican, Chicano, Other Hispanic or "none of the above." Once a variety of responses was available, SAS workers had little difficulty answering this question.

The question on racial identity was more difficult. That question asks SAS workers to indicate whether they are: white; black; Asian or Pacific Islander; Native American, Alaskan native or Indigenous; or "Other." In examining the answers to this question, it became clear that many SAS workers (39%) do not identify with U.S. racial categories and answered "Other." Almost all workers who rejected the categories listed in the NAWS were Hispanic, many of whom would be classified as white using the usual U.S. racial divisions. This problem of identification with pre-set categories is common in this type of survey.

Where does that leave us in trying to identify the ethnicity of SAS workers?

First, we can say that over three quarters (81%) of SAS workers identify themselves as part of at least one minority group. Only 19% of SAS workers identify themselves as white and non-Hispanic.

Second, 77% of SAS workers are Hispanic. Fifty-three percent are Mexicans, 15% are Mexican-Americans, and 2% are Chicanos. Seven percent identified themselves as Other Hispanics.

While workers are clear about their Hispanic origins, analyzing the question on race is less meaningful as almost 39% of SAS workers choose the "Other" category. Thus, they indicate that they do not consider themselves white, African-American, Asian, or Native or Indigenous American. The question on race identification was more useful in identifying U.S.-born SAS workers who are more familiar with the categories.²

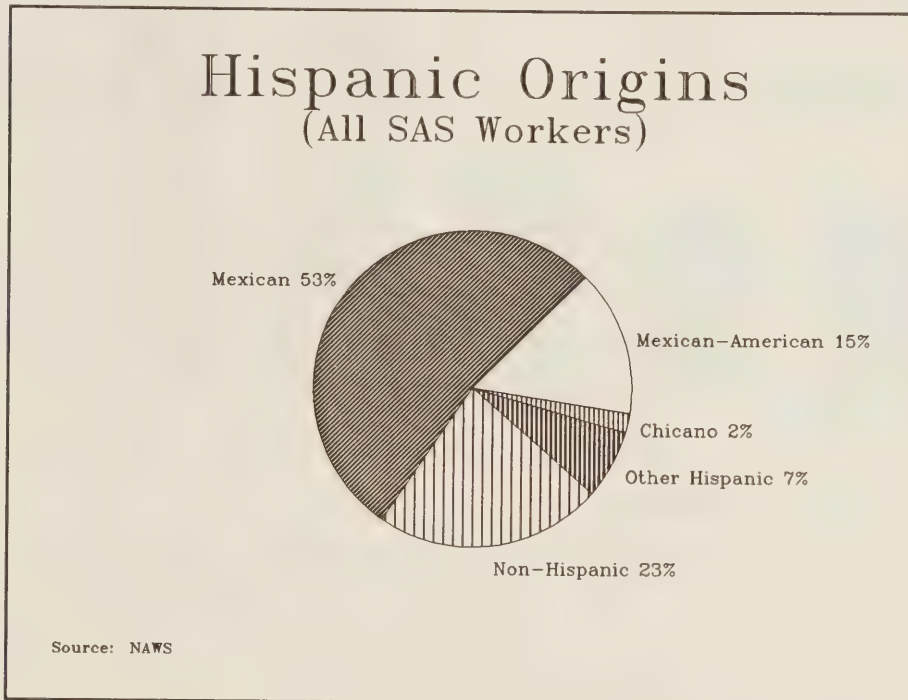


Figure 1.6 illustrates that most Hispanic SAS workers are Mexican.

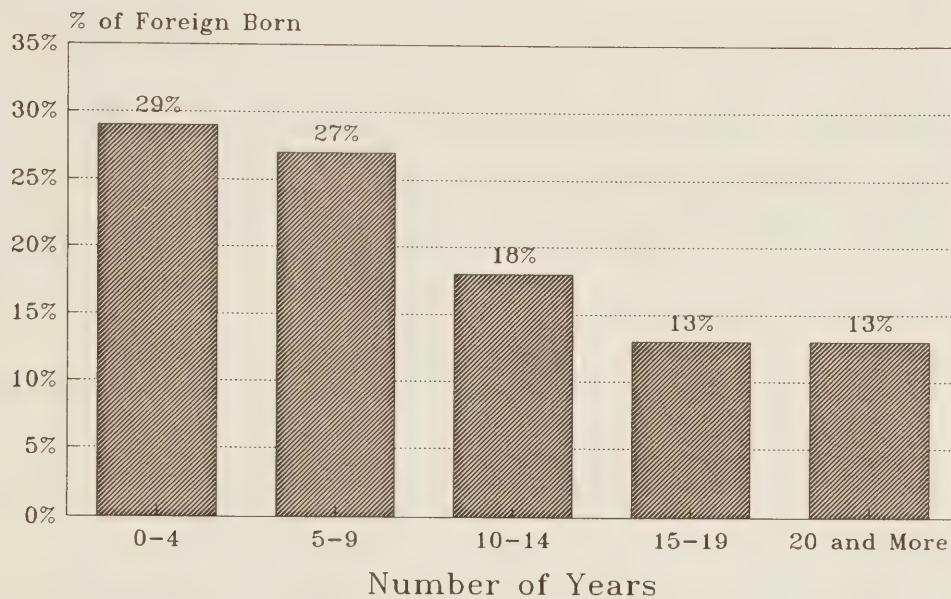
²For those who desire information on racial background, the following data are provided. Combining race and Hispanic origin, it appears 70% of SAS workers are Hispanics who identify themselves as either white or "Other" including those who identify themselves as Puerto Rican. Another 19% are white non-Hispanics. Four percent are African-Americans, of whom 1% also identified themselves as Hispanic. Asians and Pacific Islanders comprise another 1% of SAS workers, of whom a small number are both Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanic (less than 1%). The remaining 4% of SAS workers are Indigenous Mexicans and Central Americans, or Native Americans. Most (83%) members of this category are Indigenous Mexicans and Central Americans who also identify themselves as Hispanic.

Interestingly, among U.S.-born SAS workers, the majority (57%) are non-Hispanic: 49% of U.S.-born SAS workers are non-Hispanic whites, 7% are non-Hispanic blacks, and 1% are Native Americans or Asians. U.S.-born Hispanics make up 43% of the U.S.-born SAS labor force.

NUMBER OF YEARS FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS SPENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Most (56%) foreign-born SAS workers have lived in the United States fewer than ten years. Twenty-nine percent of these workers have been here under five years, 27% between five and nine years, 18% between ten and fourteen years, 13% between fifteen and nineteen years, and 13% twenty years or longer. The number of years that foreign-born workers have lived in the United States does not vary significantly across ethnic groups.

Years in the United States (Foreign-Born SAS Workers)



Source: NAWS

Figure 1.7 shows that few foreign-born workers have been in the United States more than fourteen years.

CHAPTER 2

LEGAL STATUS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses some impacts of IRCA on farm laborers. It begins with a brief introduction to IRCA and some background on legal status terminology. It then covers compliance with employer sanctions, the legal status of foreign-born workers, and the impact of legalization programs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Impact of the legalization program and of employer sanctions has been mixed.
 - Most SAS workers have work authorization, but a small minority (4%) are unauthorized.
 - Three out of ten (31%) SAS workers are SAW program applicants.
- Over one-third (36%) of foreign-born SAS workers have applied for legalization through IRCA programs.

BACKGROUND ON IRCA AND LEGAL STATUS TERMINOLOGY

In its attempt to control the employment of unauthorized foreign workers, the IRCA brought changes to employer-employee relationships. The act requires employers, including agricultural employers, to verify employee work authorization. Those who knowingly hire unauthorized workers face the threat of legal sanctions, including heavy fines and jail sentences.

To ease the impact of employer sanctions on both workers and employers, IRCA included several legalization programs. These programs allowed qualifying undocumented individuals to become United States temporary residents, and ultimately, legal permanent residents. The IRCA programs are described later in this chapter.

Before examining the impact of IRCA on the agricultural labor force, it is necessary to define the different types of legal statuses. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) issues a variety of visas to foreign nationals, not all of which confer work authorization. Authorized workers include all U.S. citizens, as well as all foreign nationals who have been granted work authorization by the INS. For purposes of this analysis, authorized workers are broken down into four categories. The first category consists of all U.S. citizens, either naturalized citizens or citizens by birth. The second category is made up of foreign nationals who have become U.S. legal permanent residents (LPR's). These workers are sometimes referred to as "green card" holders. The third category consists of all workers who have been granted temporary residency through one of IRCA's legalization programs. The final category is a residual category that contains all other work-authorized foreign nationals. This includes workers who have obtained work authorization through pending legalization applications, family unity cases, as well as other foreign nationals who have obtained work authorization as part of an INS proceeding or visa application.

Unauthorized workers include all foreign nationals who have not been granted work authorization by INS. For this analysis, unauthorized workers are broken down further into documented and undocumented workers. Not all documents that permit foreign nationals to enter or remain in the United States allow the possessor to work in the United States. For example, tourist visas and some types of student visas allow individuals to enter the United States legally, but do not authorize the bearer to work in this country. Such individuals are unauthorized but not undocumented. Undocumented individuals have neither valid visas nor work authorization.

IMPACT OF IRCA ON SEASONAL LABOR SUPPLY

The impact of employer sanctions on agriculture has been mixed. The number of unauthorized workers employed in agriculture may have declined, but unauthorized workers still comprise an important component of the seasonal labor supply. Four percent of SAS workers, amounting to about 6% of foreign-born workers, are unauthorized. Because of the tendency of unauthorized workers to avoid inclusion in government surveys or to conceal the fact that they are unauthorized, these numbers should be considered as minimums.

IRCA legalization programs have been successful in cushioning the impact of employer sanctions by expanding the supply of authorized SAS workers. Over one-third (36%) of SAS workers are IRCA authorized.

LEGAL STATUS OF SAS LABOR SUPPLY

Ninety-six percent of SAS workers are authorized to work in the United States. This includes 43% who are citizens, 16% who are legal permanent residents (LPR's), 23% who are temporary residents, and 14% who hold other work-authorized visas.

Most (95%) unauthorized workers also are undocumented. In other words, fewer than

1% of all SAS workers were legally admitted to the United States but are working without authorization.

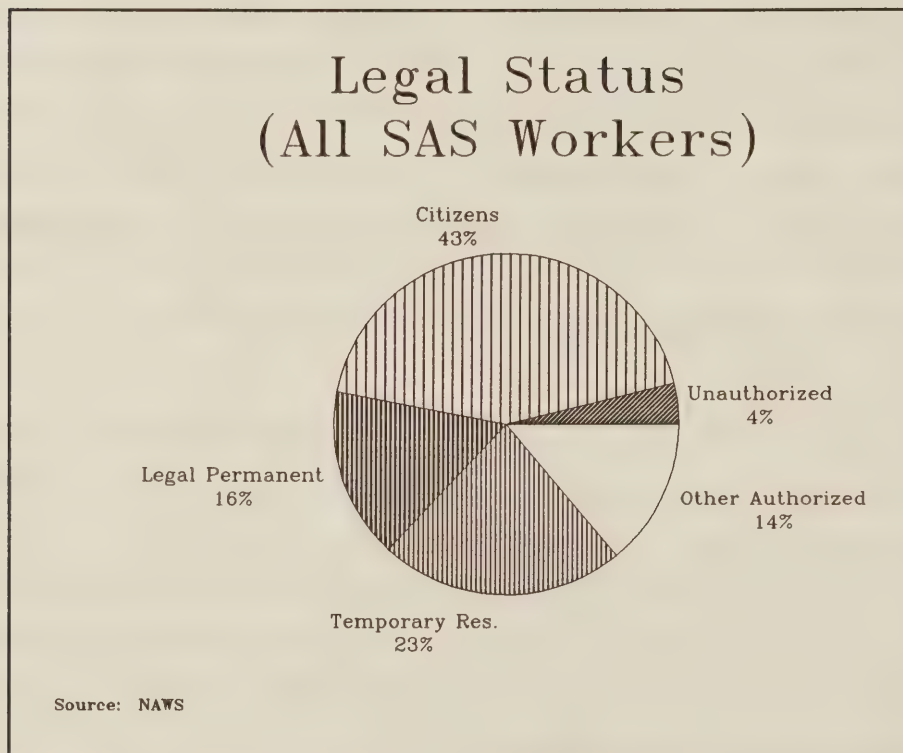


Figure 2.1 shows that most SAS workers are authorized.

LEGAL STATUS OF FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS

Most (94%) foreign-born SAS workers are individuals who are authorized to work in the United States. Authorized foreign-born workers make up 58% of all SAS laborers.

Foreign-born SAS workers can be broken down as follows: naturalized citizens, 8%; legal permanent residents, 26%; temporary residents, 38%; workers who obtained work authorization through other visas, 22%; and unauthorized workers 6%.

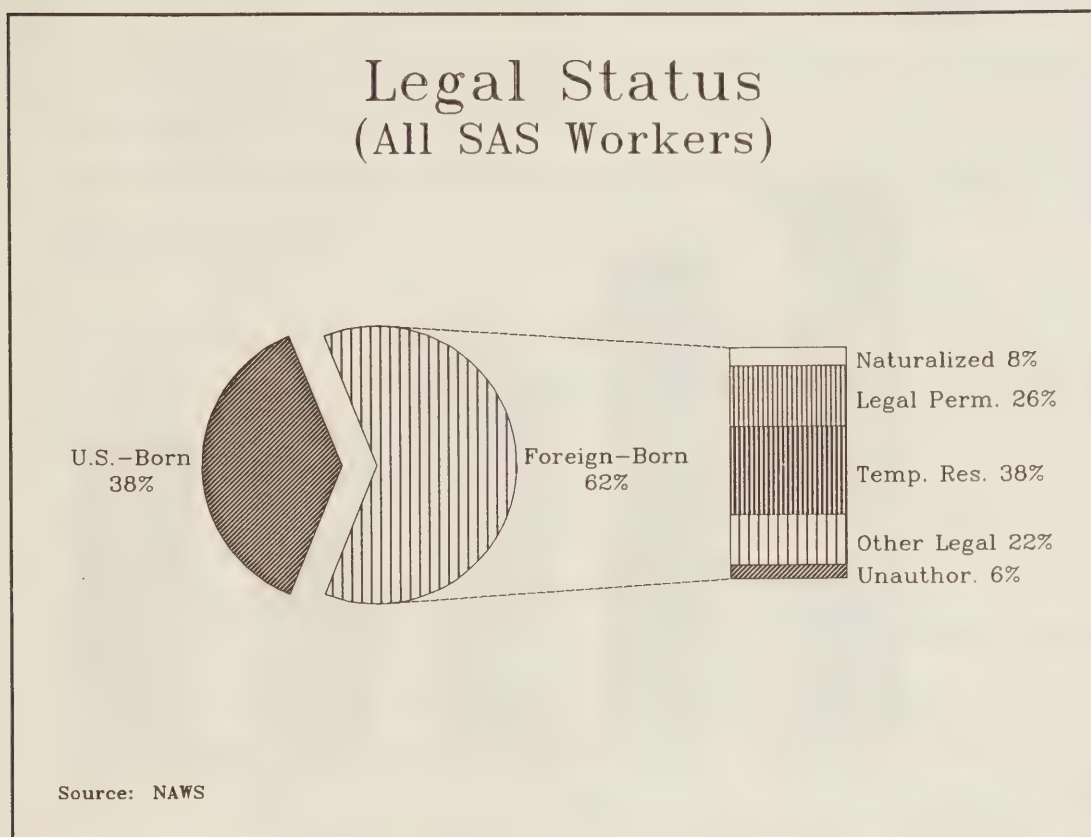


Figure 2.2 illustrates that most foreign born workers are legal U.S. residents.

The length of time that foreign-born SAS workers have been in the United States varies according to legal status. All naturalized U.S. citizens, 88% of legal permanent residents, 70% of temporary residents, 57% of other authorized workers, and 55% of undocumented workers have been in the United States for at least five years.

PARTICIPATION IN IRCA LEGALIZATION PROGRAMS

IRCA offered three separate legalization programs. The Pre-82 program provided legalization for qualifying individuals who had been in the United States unlawfully since before 1982. This program also has been referred to as the general amnesty program, the five-year program, or the lawfully authorized worker (LAW) program. The Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) program provided legalization to agricultural

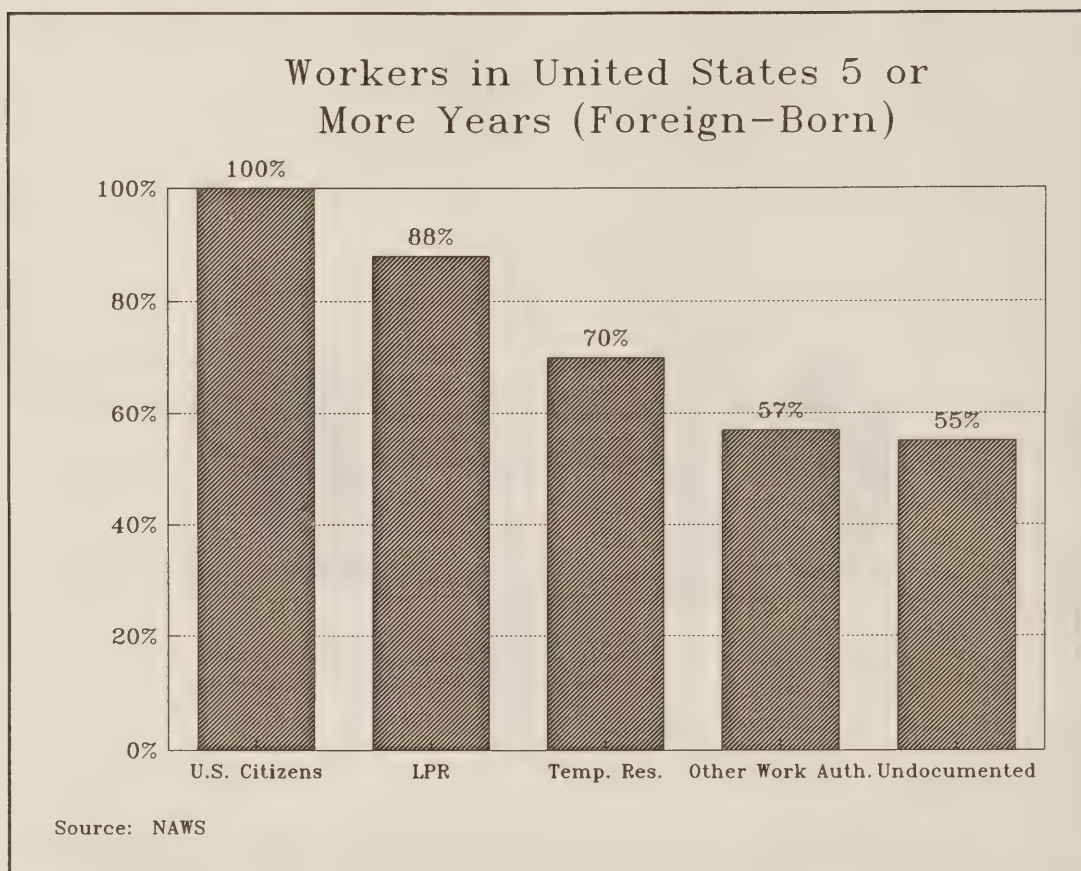


Figure 2.3 shows that many foreign-born SAS workers have been in the United States five or more years.

workers who had performed ninety days of SAS work during the year commencing May 1, 1985. The third program offered legalization to qualifying Cuban and Haitian entrants.

Nationally, the legalization programs were very popular. Over 1.3 million individuals applied for the SAW program alone. Another 70,000 agricultural workers applied under the Pre-82 program.³

³Information provided by the Department of Justice. SAW figure as of August 1990, Pre-82 information as of December 1990.

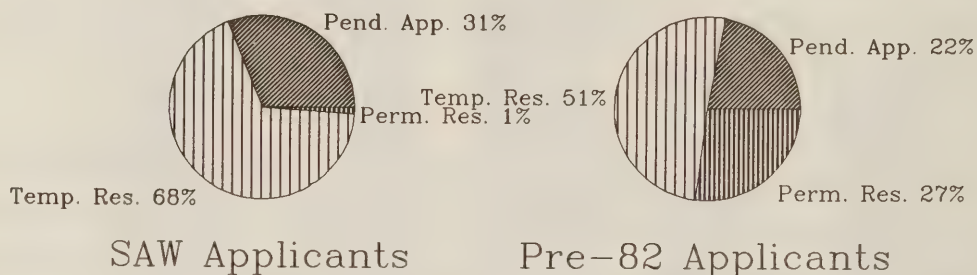
More than three years after their inception, IRCA legalization programs continue to be successful in increasing the supply of authorized agricultural workers. Thirty-three percent of SAS workers are IRCA authorized workers. These workers have SAS experience and have been in the United States for at least five years.

About one-third of SAS workers are SAW program participants (31%). Pre-82 applicants comprise 5% of the SAS work force, and Cuban-Haitian entrants constitute less than 1%.

The legalization process has several steps, and the timing of each step varies by program. Legalization applications had to be submitted before May 7, 1988 for both Pre-82s and Cuban-Haitian entrants and before November 30, 1988 for SAWs. The INS began reviewing pending applications as they were submitted. Approved applicants were granted temporary resident status. Applicants who were rejected could enter an appeals process. After a waiting period, those with temporary resident status could apply for permanent residency. The waiting period was eighteen months for Pre-82s and Cuban-Haitian entrants. SAWs who could prove three years of work experience could receive permanent residency as of December 1, 1989. SAWs with less work experience could receive permanent resident status as of December 1, 1990.

The NAWS asked legalization applicants about the status of their applications. At the time of their interviews, SAW applicants could be divided as follows: 31% had pending applications, 68% were temporary residents, and 1% were permanent residents.

IRCA Legalization (All Legalization Applicants)



Source: NAWS

Figure 2.4 shows that most SAWs are temporary residents while one-half of pre-82s already have become legal permanent residents.

CHAPTER 3

LITERACY, SCHOOLING AND ENGLISH SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers native language and home-country education, followed by adult school enrollment and English language proficiency and literacy. The NAWS results are used to present some indicators of the language proficiency of adults doing SAS work. This analysis contributes to larger efforts being made in the United States to define and measure the literacy levels of both native English speakers and those who have limited proficiency in English.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Most (54%) SAS workers have completed eight or fewer years of formal education.
- Spanish is the primary language of two out of three (66%) SAS workers.

USING THE NAWS TO ASSESS LITERACY AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Even though, at present, there is no agreed upon definition of what constitutes proficiency in language and literacy, there are a number of generally accepted indicators (grade level, educational achievement, self-assessment of language ability) that allow us to make inferences about the reading, writing and English speaking skills of the SAS workers surveyed.

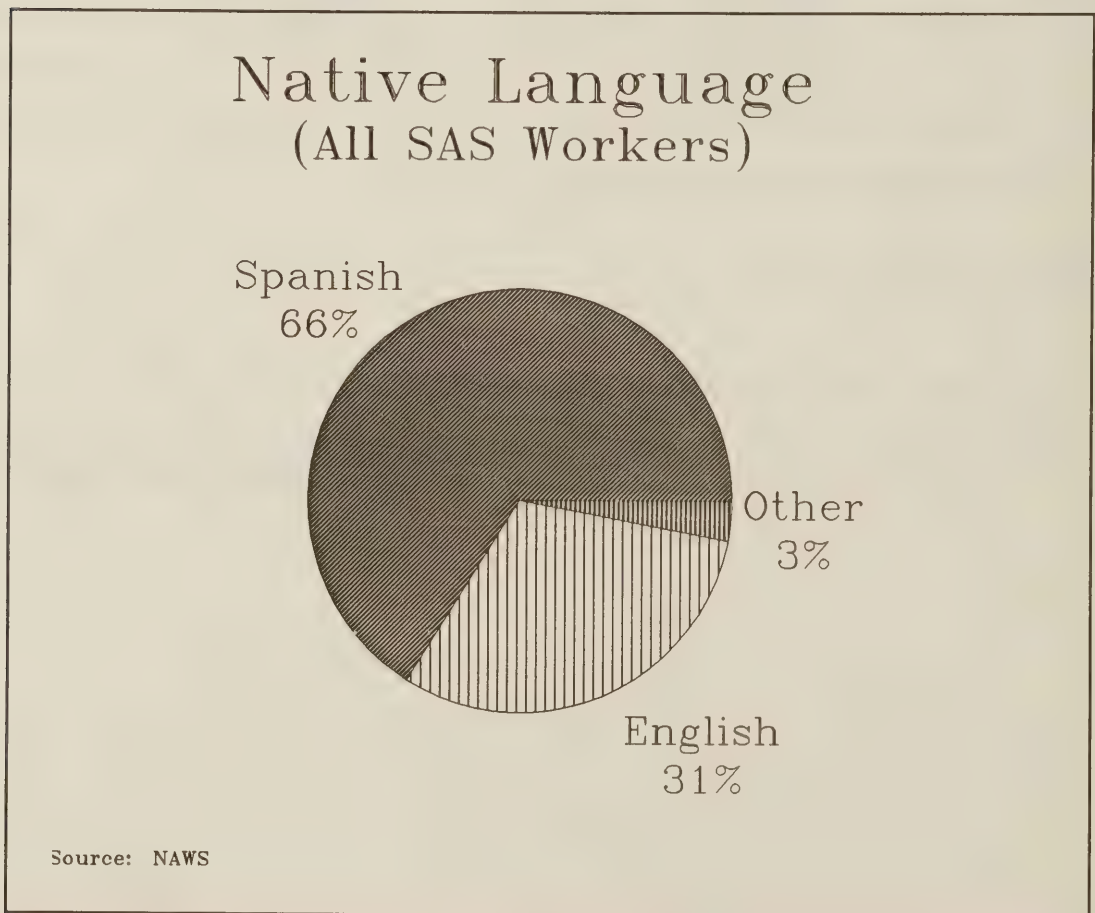


Figure 3.1 shows that almost two-thirds of SAS workers are native Spanish speakers.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE AND SCHOOLING

Most (56%) SAS workers received their highest level of formal education in their country of origin. Consequently, most SAS workers received all of their education in their primary language. An exception to this are some individuals who come from language minority groups in their native countries. In these cases, education may be provided not in the language spoken in the home, but in the official language of the society, a language in which these groups may only have limited proficiency. Groups falling into this category are U.S.-born Spanish speakers, and Mexicans and Central Americans whose native language is not Spanish.

USING GRADE LEVELS TO MEASURE LITERACY

Though many studies report educational grade level as a measure of literacy, examinations of census data have shown that equating literacy levels with grade levels is in many ways problematic. School completion data are not able to measure out-of-school learning in language and literacy. Nevertheless, the amount of schooling a worker has received can be used as a strong indicator of level of literacy.

Most SAS workers have had little formal schooling. The median level of education is eighth grade. This measure includes all formal schooling whether received in the United States or abroad. On average, U.S.-educated workers have had more years of instruction than those educated abroad. While the median level of education of SAS workers educated in the United States is eleventh grade, the median level of education for those educated abroad is sixth grade.

SAS workers who received schooling in their primary language have slightly higher median levels of education than those who were taught in a second (or third) language. Within the United States, the median level of education is twelfth grade for

native English speakers and tenth grade for those whose native language is not English. The median level of education abroad is six years for all foreign workers.

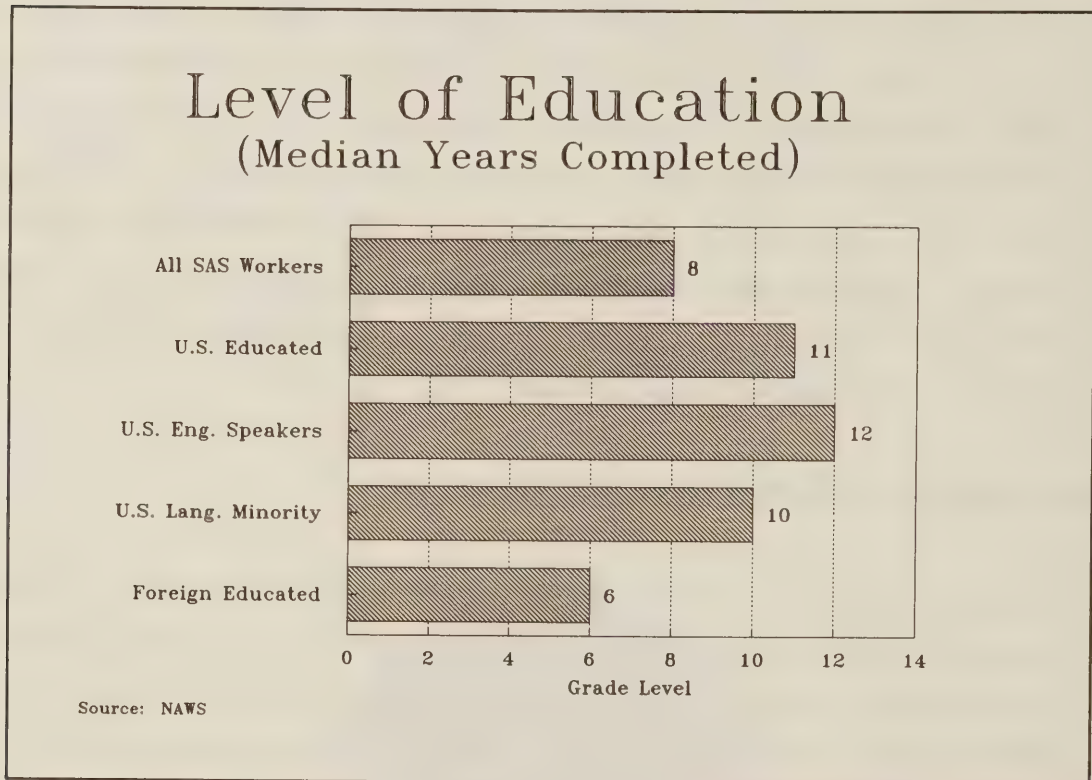


Figure 3.2 shows that foreign educated workers and language minority workers have lower education levels than U.S. English speakers.

Although grade levels completed in school and literacy levels do not necessarily correlate with present abilities to read and write, school completion data provide some indication of how well adults can process and use print. Jeanne Chall, director of Harvard University's Reading Lab, divides adults into three major groups:

Totally Illiterate - skills are below the fourth grade level and the individual cannot acquire information through print.

Functionally Illiterate - a person who can read between the fourth and seventh grade levels.

Marginally Literate - a person who can read between the eighth and twelfth grade levels, but lacks the twelfth grade equivalence needed in a complex technological society.⁶

Assuming that those SAS workers surveyed have not had many opportunities to improve their education and increase their literacy levels, most (76%) SAS workers would have difficulty obtaining information from printed materials in any language according to Chall's standards. Twenty-eight percent of SAS workers have between eight and twelve years of education and thus are marginally literate. Another 30% have between a fourth and seventh grade education and fall into the functionally illiterate category. Finally, 18% of SAS workers have less than a fourth grade education and thus are considered totally illiterate.

These numbers have strong consequences in an economy in which a significant number of employers report that many high school graduates lack the basic skills needed for entry-level jobs. The lack of literacy may severely limit the economic and social opportunities of these adults.

It is important, however, to point out that many of these workers have strengths that are not reflected in grade or literacy levels. NAWS data show that most adults doing SAS work have been employed in the United States for more than seven years. For the most part, they have been self-sufficient, have found housing, raised families and have acquired the skills and information to cope with every day life in the United States.

⁶ Source: *LSCA Programs: An Action Report II*, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., April 1989, p. 3.

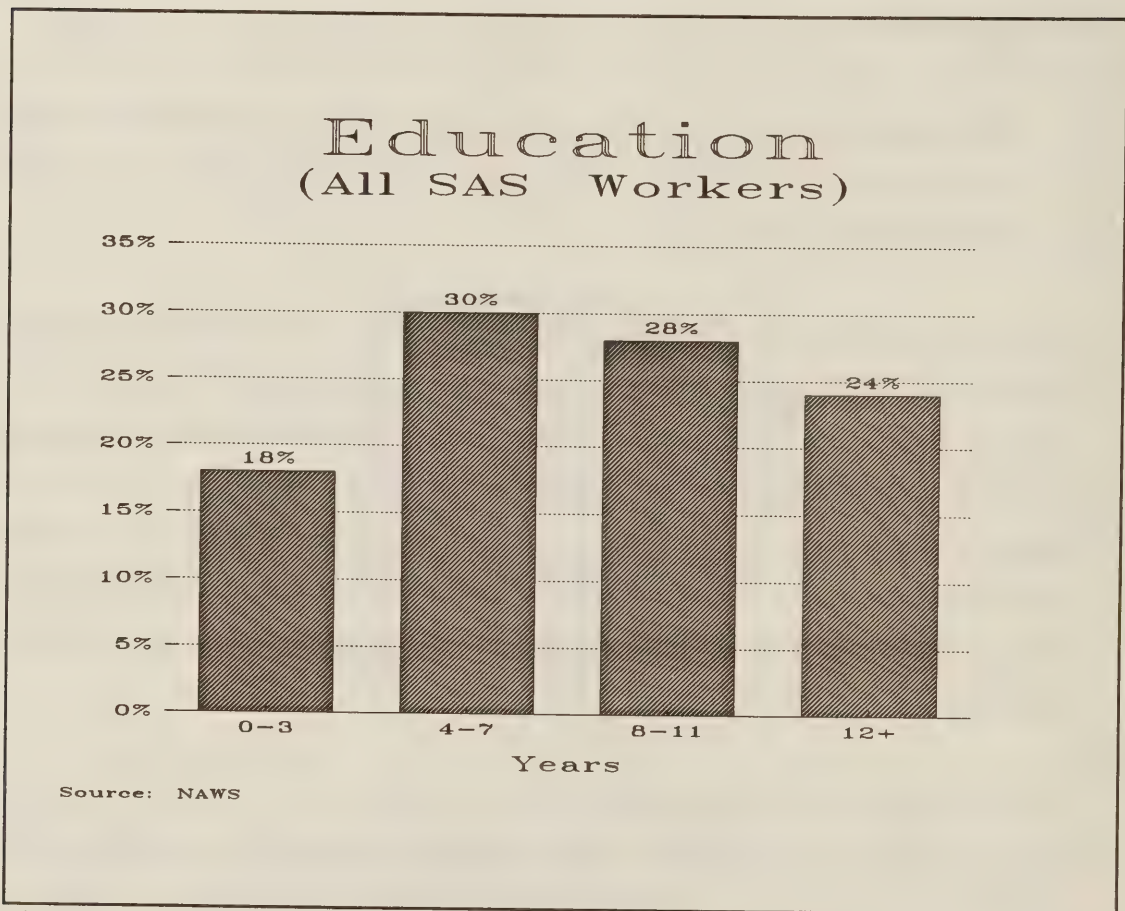


Figure 3.3 shows that SAS workers have low levels of education.

CHAPTER 4

FAMILY RESIDENCE AND WORK SITE HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports information on family residence and household composition. It covers family type, family residence, and household size and composition.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The majority (54%) of SAS workers are married and/or have children.
- More than one-half (55%) of SAS workers reside with their families at the work site. Men (48%) and foreign-born (45%) workers are the least likely to reside with family at the work site.
- The median number of people who live in SAS worker households is three.
- All of the adults in households of single SAS workers who live with parents work. The vast majority (84%) of adults in households of SAS worker parents and/or married couples hold jobs. Forty-six percent of adult single SAS workers live away from their parents.
- Almost one-half (56%) of children over the age of fourteen in SAS worker households hold a job.

FAMILY TYPE

For the purposes of this analysis, families of SAS workers have been divided into three types: families headed by parents (whether married or single); married individuals without children; and single individuals.

The majority (51%) of SAS workers are parents. Thirteen percent are married with no children, and 36% are single.⁷

WORK SITE FAMILY RESIDENCE AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

It is common for SAS workers to live away from their immediate families while they are doing SAS work. These "unaccompanied" SAS workers may have distinct behaviors and special needs. This distinction, therefore, has been a subject of analysis. Unaccompanied SAS workers work away from their parents, spouse and children. If a parent SAS worker lives with his or her children or spouse, a married SAS worker lives with his or her spouse, or a SAS worker of any kind lives with a parent while doing SAS work, then we classify that SAS worker as accompanied. Others are unaccompanied.

An unaccompanied SAS worker should not be confused with a migrant worker. Families residing together at a work site may be follow-the-crop migrants, who move from work site to work site. They may also be shuttle migrants, who move away from their home base to a farm work area where they settle for the work year. On the other hand, SAS worker families may not be migrants, but rather settled families living within commuting distance of the work site. The SAS worker is not unaccompanied

⁷ The definition of single here is different from the definition in chapter 2. It excludes those SAS workers whose marital status is single but have children. These SAS workers are categorized as parents.

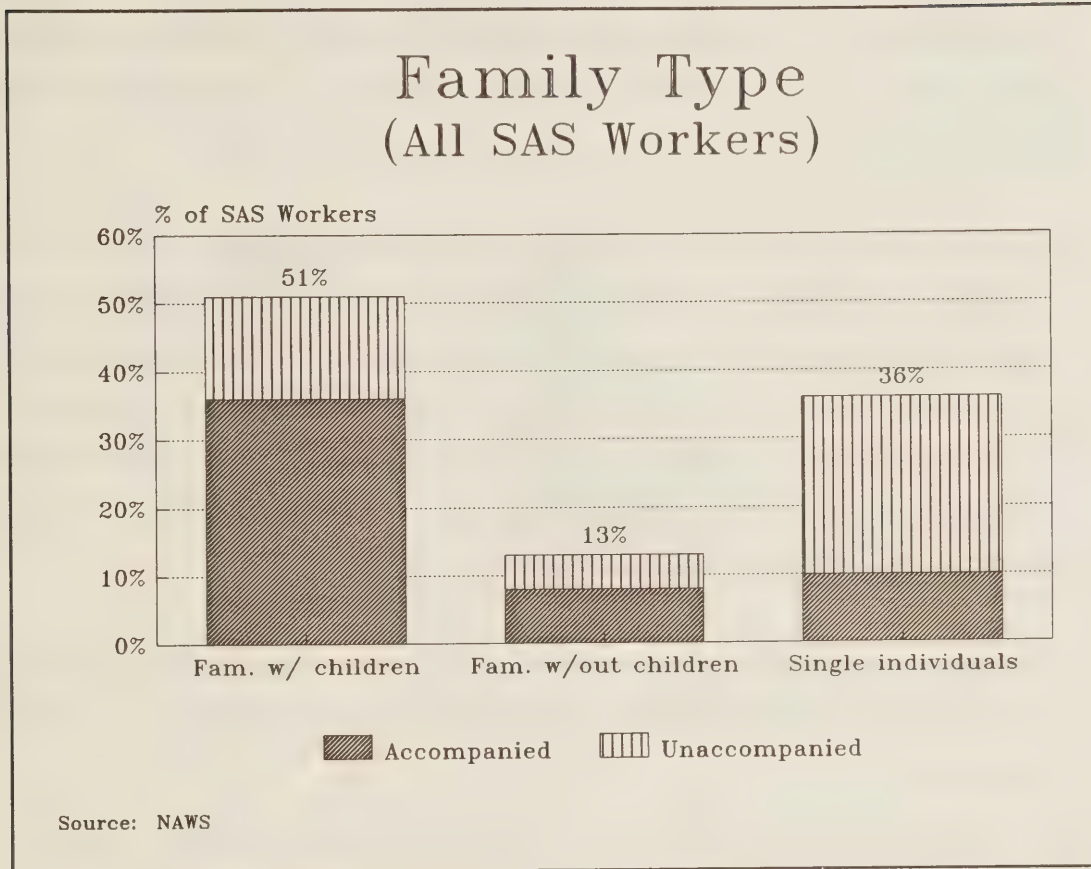


Figure 4.1 shows that about one-half of SAS workers reside with their families at the work site.

in any of these cases. On the other hand, SAS workers who do not migrate to perform SAS work, but live away from their immediate family are unaccompanied. NAWS does not collect information about payments or remittances of single individuals to their non-resident families. It cannot distinguish single unaccompanied adults without family responsibilities from those who remit a substantial part of their income to parents or other relatives. Therefore, a single unaccompanied SAS worker is not necessarily free from family responsibilities.

More than one-half (55%) of SAS workers are accompanied. Another 20% have spouses and/or children who live elsewhere and are also not accompanied by their parents. The remaining 25% are single workers, unaccompanied by their parents.

Over two-thirds (71%) of SAS workers with children are accompanied; 63% of married SAS workers without children are accompanied; and 31% of single individuals are accompanied.

Almost one-third (31%) of SAS workers who are married and/or have children live away from their families. Seventy-four percent of these individuals have families abroad. More than one-half of spouses (70%) and/or children (66%) who do not live with the SAS worker live in Mexico; 15% have children and 12% have spouses in the United States; 2% have children and 1% have spouses in Central America; 2% have children and 1% have spouses in the Caribbean. The remaining 11% have children elsewhere and 20% report having spouses who live elsewhere.

Over one-fourth (27%) of single workers live with their U.S. resident parents, and almost three out of four (73%) live on their own, away from their U.S. or foreign resident parents.

GENDER AND WORK SITE FAMILY RESIDENCE

While less than one-half (48%) of male SAS workers are accompanied, 74% of women SAS workers are accompanied.

This pattern occurs in all family types. Almost all (96%) SAS worker mothers reside with their spouse, children and/or parents. On the other hand, only 65% of fathers, reside with their spouse, children and/or parents. Among married couples without children, only 53% of the men reside with their wives and/or parents at the work site, while 93% of the women reside with their husbands and/or parents. Finally, 42% of single women live with their parents, compared to 23% of single men.

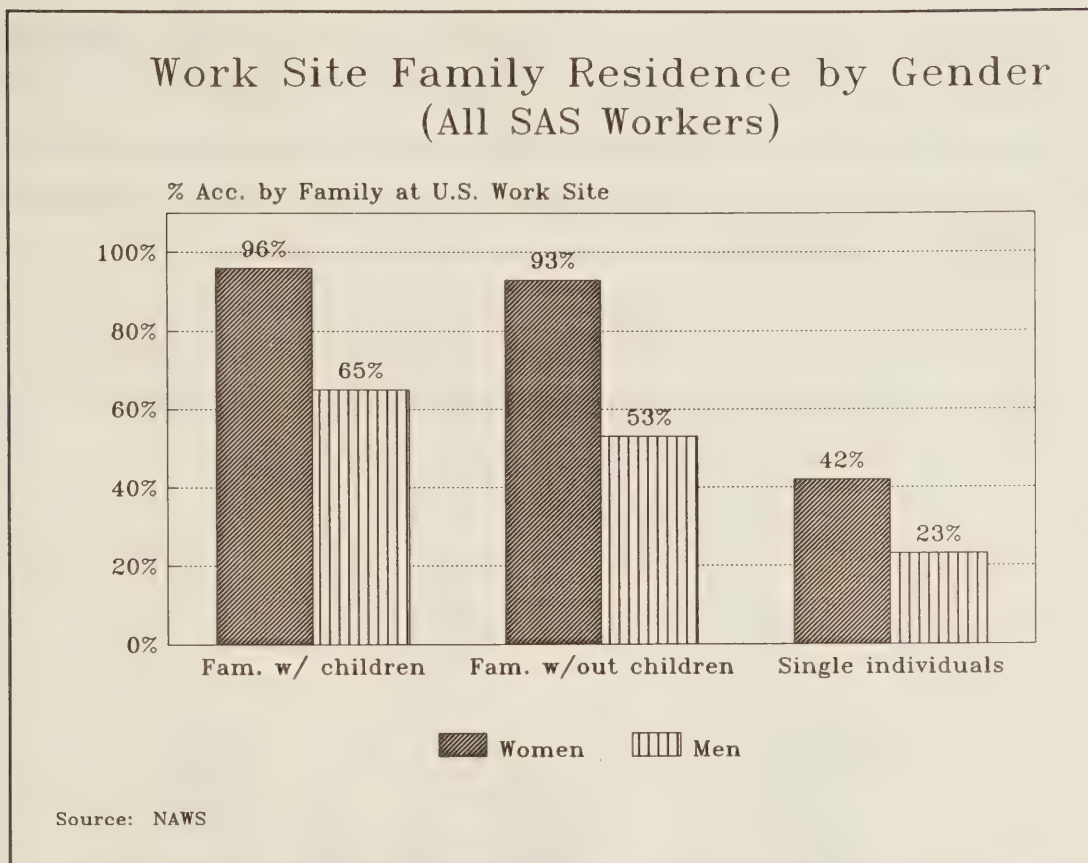


Figure 4.2 shows that men are less likely than women to reside with their families while working.

PLACE OF BIRTH AND FAMILY RESIDENCE

U.S.-born workers are more likely to reside with their families than foreign-born workers (71% vs. 45%). This is true across all family types. U.S.-born parents are more likely to be accompanied than foreign-born parents (87% vs. 63%). Similarly, 87% of U.S.-born married SAS workers without children are accompanied, compared to 46% of those who are foreign-born. Finally, with regard to single SAS workers without children, 47% of those who are U.S.-born and 13% of those who are foreign-born are accompanied by parents.

Whether or not the SAS worker resides with family varies by ethnic origin: 76% of U.S.-born whites, 72% of African-Americans, 67% of U.S.-born Hispanics, 45% of Mexican-born workers, 27% of Non-Mexican Latin American-born, 65% of Asian-born, 40% of Non-Spanish Caribbean-born, and 52% of other foreign-born SAS workers are accompanied.

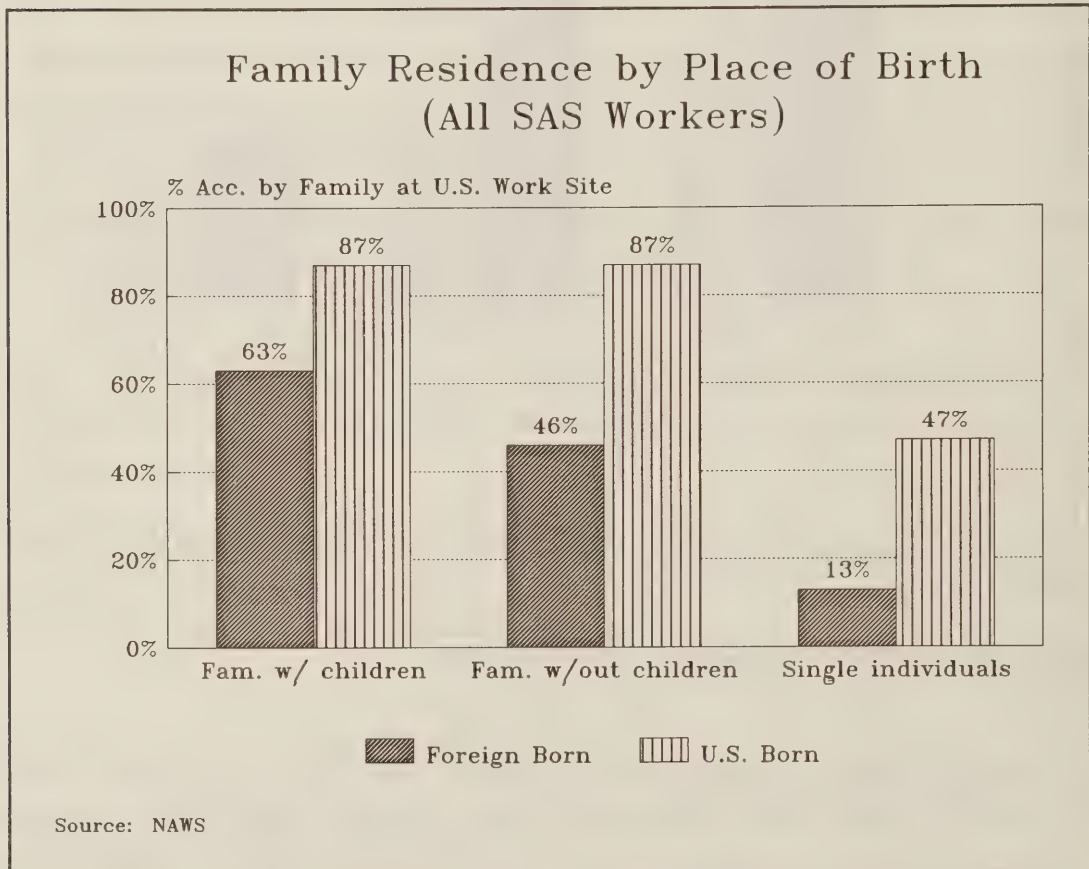


Figure 4.3 shows that foreign-born workers are less likely than U.S.-born workers to reside with their families while working.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

SAS workers who are parents tend to live in nuclear families. Most (88%) parents are married. Their households average five people: most commonly consisting of the worker, the spouse and three children. Almost one-third (30%) of the children of SAS workers live away from their SAS worker parent. The average number of children in the household for SAS worker parents is three.

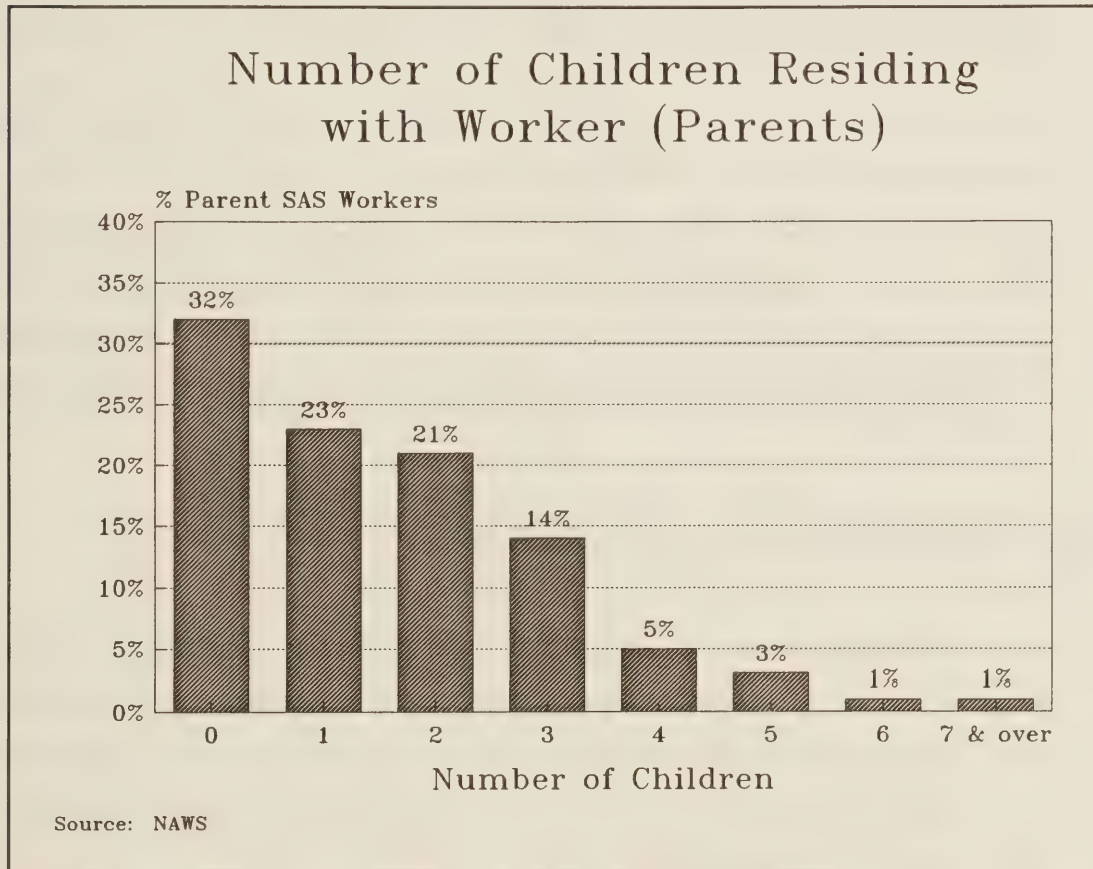


Figure 4.4 shows that the median number of children residing with a SAS worker parent is one.

The nuclear SAS worker family sometimes serves as an "anchor family" for extended family and friends. The average married SAS worker without children lives with his or her spouse and one other person in a three-person household. Non-family and extended family members are sometimes found in households headed by SAS worker parents or SAS worker married couples. One sibling or extended family member is present, on average, in about one-eighth (12%) of these households. One non-family member is present, on average, in about one-fourth (23%) of these households.

Single (and childless) SAS workers residing with their parents live in households that average four immediate family members over the age of fifteen: the respondent, two parents, and one sibling. These families, at times, also have extended family or non-family members living with them averaging only one extended family member in twenty-five households and one non-family member in one out of eight households.⁸ The households of single SAS workers who live away from parents average four people.

EMPLOYMENT OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

In households where the SAS worker is a single (and childless) adult living with his or her parents, almost all adults work. On average, one is engaged in a non-SAS job. Single SAS workers who live away from their parents typically live in a household of three workers. On average, two of the three housemates work in SAS work and the other person does non-SAS work.

⁸ Averages do not include siblings who are under the age of fifteen.

CHAPTER 5

ASSETS AND USE OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports information on SAS workers' incomes, assets and use of social services. It covers personal income, family income, assets in the United States and home country, as well as family poverty status, and use of government and private social services.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- More than one-fifth (21%) of SAS workers are recipients of needs-based social services. Food Stamps is the type of assistance most often received.
- Fewer than one-third (28%) of SAS workers receive income from worker or employer supported government programs.
- A small minority (3%) of SAS workers receive aid from private organizations.

HOUSES, VEHICLES, AND OTHER ASSETS

Over one-third (36%) of SAS workers own no property apart from their personal belongings. The most frequently (50%) owned asset is a car or truck. Ten percent of SAS workers own or are buying a home in the United States.

Proportionately more U.S.-born workers than foreign-born workers own a vehicle (65% and 41%, respectively). Almost one-third (32%) of foreign-born workers own assets in their country of origin.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Despite the low levels of income and limited assets of SAS workers, few (21%) SAS workers report that their households received any type of needs-based assistance from government operated social service programs during the two years preceding the interview. The most frequently used social service is Food Stamps, which is used by 18% of SAS worker households.

SAS workers whose households received needs-based government social services within the last two years can be broken down as follows: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (3%); Food Stamps (18%); General Assistance (local welfare) (4%); and low income housing (3%). In some cases, households used more than one service.

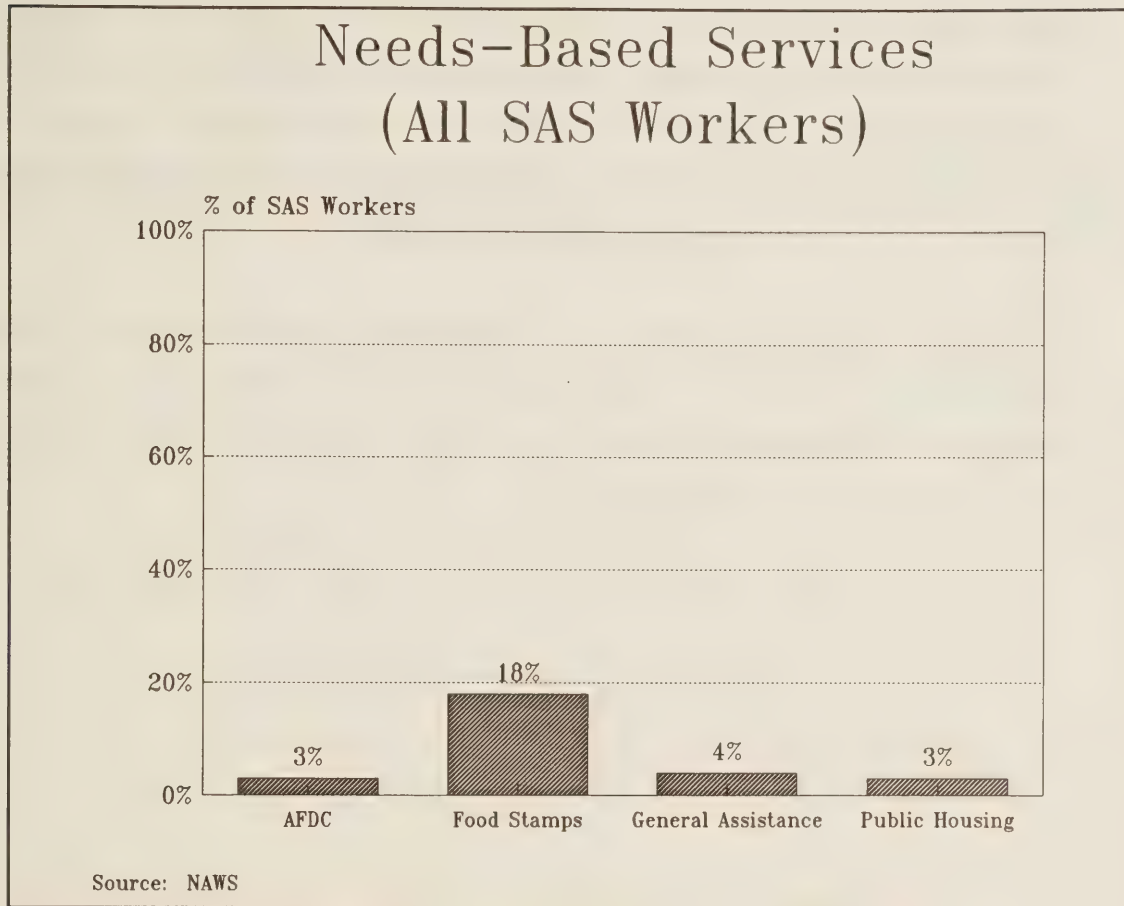


Figure 5.1 illustrates that SAS workers rarely use needs-based social services.

Families of SAS workers who are U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents have the highest usage of needs-based social services (26% each). Fourteen percent of temporary residents and other authorized worker families use needs-based services. Families of 6% of the undocumented SAS workers use needs-based social services.⁹

⁹Since the questions referred to workers' household use of social services, no inferences can or should be drawn about unauthorized use of social services. We do not know the legal statuses of other members of the households. There may or may not be other household members who qualify for needs-based social services.

Twenty-eight percent of SAS worker families have received income within the last two years from government programs funded by worker and/or employer contributions. Twenty-one percent of SAS worker families received unemployment insurance; 4% received disability insurance; 7% received Social Security; and 1% received Veteran Pensions.

Additionally, 3% of SAS workers say their families received aid from private organizations. The number of SAS workers whose families have received services from private agencies can be broken down as follows: churches or religious charities (2%), and community organizations (1%).

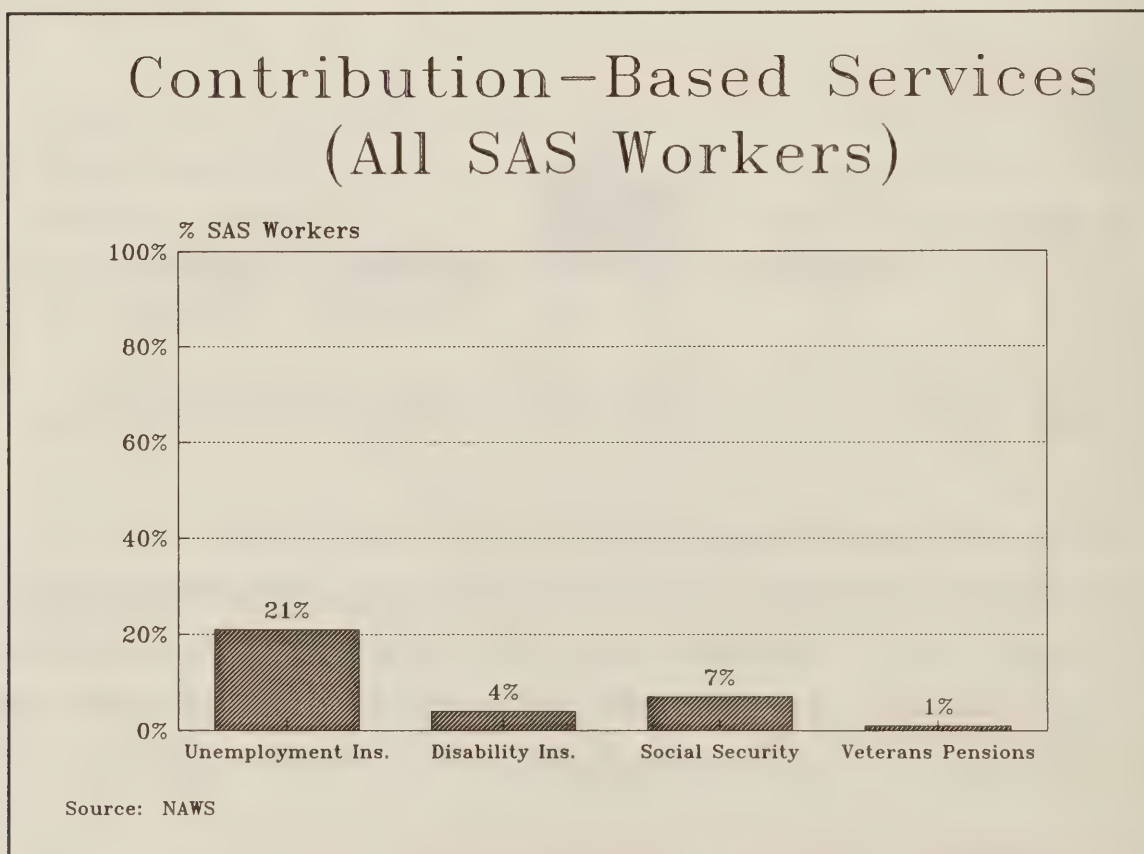


Figure 5.2 shows that SAS worker families receive little assistance from government programs for workers.

**SECTION II: EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS AND JOB
CHARACTERISTICS**

CHAPTER 6

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY AND LABOR SUPPLY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports information on SAS worker employment patterns and their relationship to working conditions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- SAS workers spend more than one-half (60%) of the year doing SAS work.
- Most (64%) SAS workers would be willing to do more SAS work, but the majority (63%) are not willing to migrate in search of additional work.
- Most (71%) SAS workers plan to continue doing SAS work indefinitely unless they become physically unable.
- Among those intending to leave SAS work, the most common (38%) reason given is dissatisfaction with the terms of employment.
- In order of descending importance, the job factors ranked as important in sustaining SAS workers' willingness to engage in SAS work are wages, benefits and job stability.

PREVIOUS YEAR'S WORK HISTORY

In order to qualify for the NAWS, all workers had to have been employed in a SAS job at the time of the interview, and hence, at some time in the year before the interview. In a one-year period, 54% of SAS workers spend some time not working while in the United States; 21% of SAS workers spend some time abroad; and 29% spend some time in a non-SAS job.

SAS workers spend on average thirty-one weeks, or 60% of their available work time, doing SAS work. These workers also spend fourteen weeks (27% of the year) not working in the United States. Over one-fourth, about four weeks of the fourteen weeks is spent abroad, and the rest of this period, about ten weeks, is spent in the United States. The remaining 13% of the year, or seven weeks, is spent doing non-SAS work.

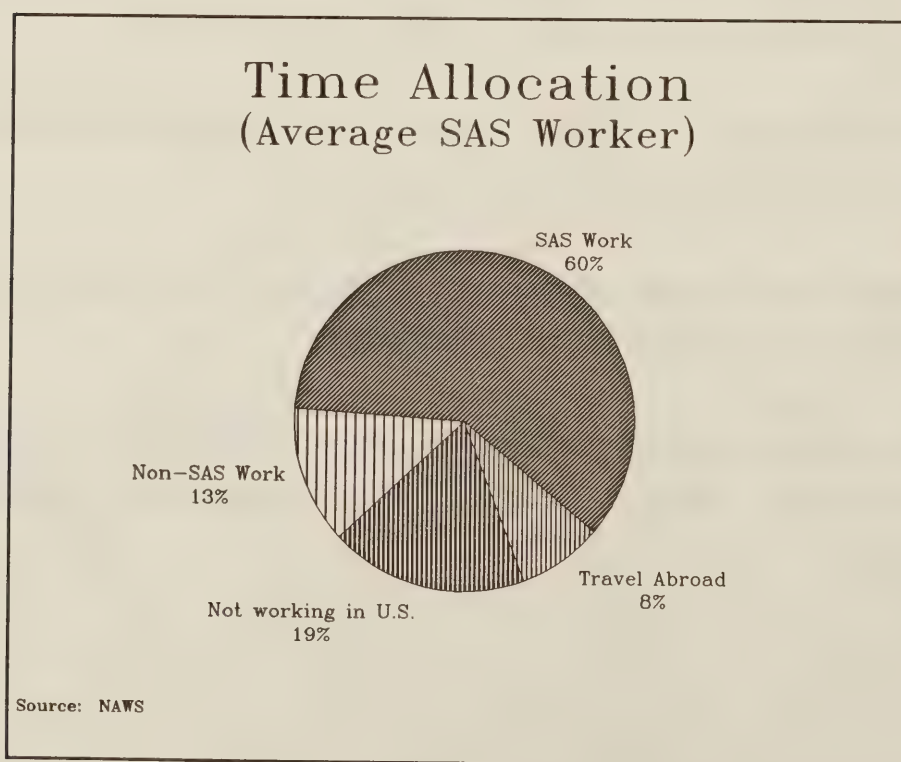


Figure 6.1 shows that SAS workers spent over one-half of the year in SAS work.

WILLINGNESS TO DO SAS WORK

Almost two-thirds (64%) of the SAS work force would do more SAS work during the year were it available. Most (71%) SAS workers plan to continue in SAS work for at least five years, providing that they remain physically able. Seven percent expect to leave field work within one year; 13% expect to leave within three years; 6% expect to leave within five years; and 3% answered "other" to this question.

Thirty-eight percent of SAS workers who say they expect to leave SAS work within one year cite dissatisfaction with the terms of employment as their reason for wanting to leave. Thirteen percent are dissatisfied with the working conditions, 20% are dissatisfied with the pay, and 5% are dissatisfied with the benefits. An additional 42% of SAS workers expect to leave SAS work within one year because they wish to do some other kind of work. Another 1% expect to leave because they dislike the seasonal nature of the work. The remaining 17% have other reasons for wanting to leave SAS work.

Of SAS workers desiring to leave SAS work within one year, 14% would seek employment in construction. Manufacturing work is the choice of 19% of SAS laborers who want to leave within a year; maintenance and mechanical work is preferred by 8%; and clerical, health or professional work is preferred by 19%.

TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

Transportation to work is an important issue since only one-half of SAS workers own a car. Three percent of SAS workers are charged by their employers for rides. Three times more workers employed by farm labor contractors (7%) report this practice than workers employed by growers (2%).

Almost one-half (45%) of SAS workers drive a car or truck to work. One-fourth (26%) ride with others, 18% ride a labor bus, 6% walk, and the remaining 5% take other forms of transportation.

MIGRATION AND LABOR AVAILABILITY

Most (63%) SAS workers say they are not willing to travel more than commuting distance from home in order to secure work. However, a sizable minority (37%) say they would be willing to travel in search of work. This consists of 7% of SAS workers willing to stay away from home overnight; another 12% who are willing to relocate temporarily; and another 18% who are willing to move permanently.

IMPORTANCE OF WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS TO LABOR SUPPLY

SAS workers were asked to indicate whether various factors were very important, somewhat important, or not important to their willingness to continue doing SAS work.

Most (88%) SAS workers consider higher wages very important.

Eighty percent of SAS workers regard improved benefits as very important. Ninety-two percent of those working for farm labor contractors consider this issue very important, compared to 77% of those who work directly for the grower.

Seventy-eight percent of SAS workers consider the employer's guarantee of a minimum amount of work very important. Ninety-one percent of those working for farm labor contractors find this issue very important while 76% of those hired directly find it very important.

Fifty-two percent of SAS workers regard better job information as very important. Those working for farm labor contractors consider it very important more often (78%) than those who work directly for growers (49%).

In addition, the majority of SAS workers report that free or low cost housing, paid transportation to work, child care and employer provided meals are somewhat important.

CHAPTER 7

SAS EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports information on the characteristics of SAS jobs. It covers crop, task, wages, hours per week, benefits, and working conditions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Almost one-third (31%) of SAS workers perform harvest work.
- Over three-quarters (82%) of SAS workers work in fruits, nuts or vegetables.
- Almost nine out of ten SAS workers (89%) are employed directly by producers or packing houses.
- SAS laborers are usually (80%) paid by the hour and the median wage is \$4.50 per hour.
- SAS workers report that they are usually not covered by Unemployment Insurance (54%), Worker's Compensation (61%), or health insurance (78%).
- Almost one-fifth (19%) of SAS workers do not have access to water for washing at the work site. Eight percent do not have access to drinking water, and nineteen percent do not have access to toilets. Twenty-eight percent of SAS workers lack access to at least one of the three.

CROP

Over three-quarters (82%) of SAS laborers work in fruits, nuts, vegetables or horticulture. Smaller numbers of SAS workers are found in field crops (12%) and other crops (6%).

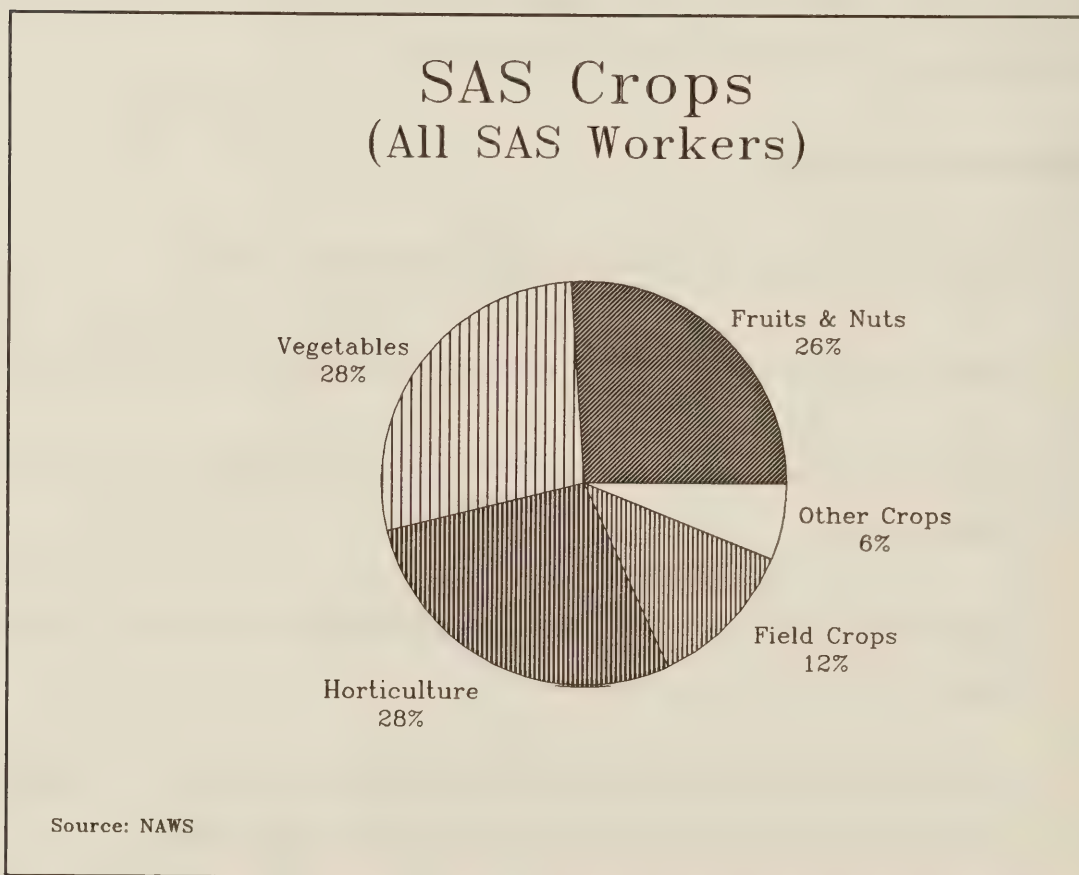


Figure 7.1 shows that most SAS workers are employed in fruits, nuts or vegetables.

TASK

Almost one-third of the SAS workers harvest crops (31%). Another 21% perform semi-skilled tasks such as irrigating, operating machinery, or pruning. Twenty-four percent perform pre-harvest tasks such as hoeing, thinning, and transplanting; eleven

percent in post-harvest tasks such as field packing, sorting or grading; one percent supervising; and twelve percent in other tasks (12%).

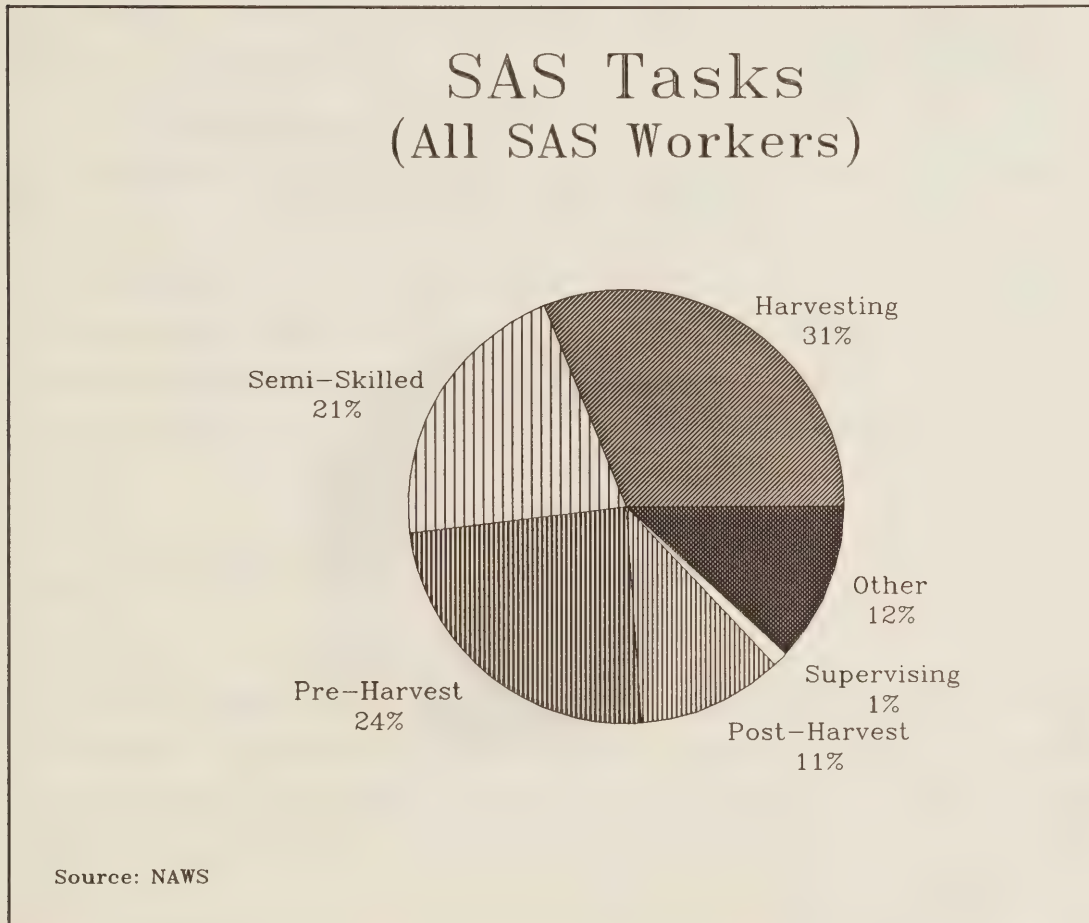


Figure 7.2 shows that harvesting is the most common SAS task.

TYPE OF EMPLOYER

Most (89%) of SAS workers are hired directly either by growers (84%) and packing operations or other employers who hire directly (5%). Farm labor contractors hire 11% of SAS workers.

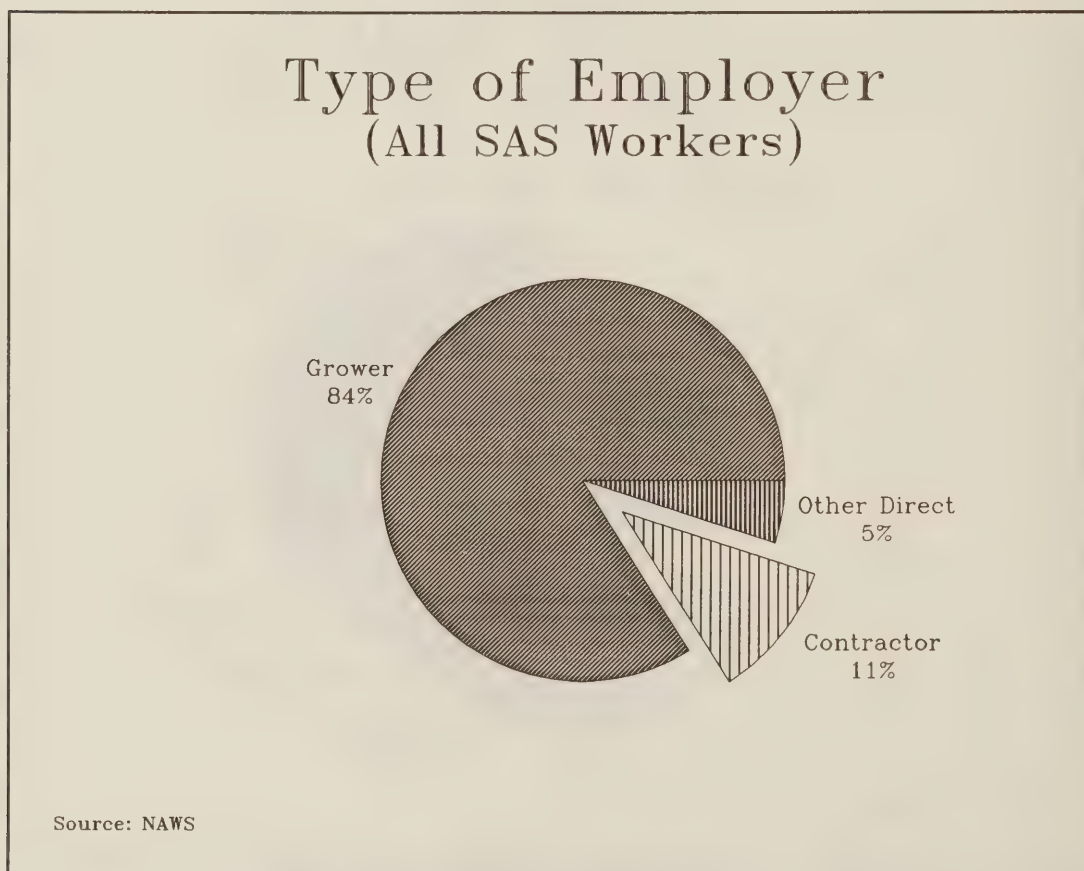


Figure 7.3 shows that most SAS workers are hired directly.

RECRUITMENT

Formal recruiting methods account for the employment of only 8% of SAS workers. Most SAS workers secure employment through their own efforts. Almost one-half (46%) of SAS workers found their SAS jobs through referrals from friends or relatives. Another 30% of SAS workers applied for work on their own.

Only 1% of SAS workers are referred by the U.S. Employment Service, and less than 1% are referred as a result of union hiring agreements.

Employers play a more active role in retaining workers than they do in initial recruitment. While only 14% of SAS workers are actively recruited by their employers, 46% report that their employers have a worker retention program. Confining responses to the 64% of SAS workers who are regularly laid off at the end of the season, 72% work for employers with active worker retention programs.

Among workers who are regularly laid off at the end of the season, the typical means of encouraging worker retention include talking with the workers at the end of each season (33%), writing to the worker (8%), telephoning the worker (31%), and having someone else contact the worker (17%). Some growers employ more than one method.

WAGES

Often SAS workers perform more than one task for the same employer. Accordingly, information on wages and method of payment was collected on the most important task the worker was engaged in during the week prior to the interview. The median wage for this is \$4.50/hour.

SAS workers are paid in one of three ways: by the hour, by the piece (in which pay is directly related to productivity), or in some combination of the two. Eighty percent of SAS workers are paid by the hour, 17% by the piece, and 3% in some combination. Different types of workers are paid in different ways. Forty-six percent of harvesters are paid by the piece compared to 10% of post-harvest workers, 2% of pre-harvest workers and 6% of semi-skilled laborers. Similarly, work in some crops is more likely to be paid by the piece. A significant minority of SAS workers in fruits and nuts, as well as vegetables (19% and 31%, respectively) are paid by the piece. Horticulture

workers (5%) and field crop workers (9%) rarely are paid by the piece. Workers hired by farm labor contractors are more likely to be paid by the piece (26%) than those hired directly by growers (16%).

Piece rate workers are less likely to receive benefits than workers paid by the hour. Forty-one percent of workers who are paid by the hour report that they are covered by Worker's Compensation compared to 27% of those paid by the piece. Similarly, workers paid by the hour are more likely to be covered by Unemployment Insurance (49%) than workers who are paid by the piece (34%).

Undocumented workers more often are paid by the piece (32%) than documented workers (16%). Of all the legal statuses, U. S. citizens are the least likely to be paid by the piece (4%).

BONUSES

Paying cash bonuses does not appear to be standard procedure for either farm labor contractors or agricultural producers. Bonuses are given to only one-fourth of SAS workers. Of workers who receive bonuses, 7% receive bonuses dependent on grower profit; 20% receive end-of-season bonuses; 14% receive incentive bonuses; 38% receive holiday bonuses; and 46% receive other types of bonuses. Some SAS workers receive more than one type of bonus.

BENEFITS

The NAWS asked SAS workers what benefits they were aware of receiving at their job. In some cases, SAS workers are entitled to benefits (particularly state mandated benefits) of which they may not be conscious and, therefore, unlikely to claim.

Forty-six percent of SAS workers report being covered by Unemployment Insurance. Thirty percent of workers hired by farm labor contractors and 49% of those workers hired directly are covered by Unemployment Insurance.

Thirty-nine percent of SAS workers report being covered by Worker's Compensation. Twenty-five percent of employees who work for farm labor contractors are covered while 41% of those hired directly are covered.

In addition to state mandated benefits, 21% of SAS workers are covered by off-the-job health insurance. Workers who are hired directly are over two times more likely to receive health insurance than workers hired by farm labor contractors (23% versus 9%). SAS workers receive paid vacations 27% of the time. Growers' employees receive paid vacations more often than farm labor contractors' employees (29% vs. 3%).

Thirty percent of SAS workers live in employer-provided housing. This 30% is divided among 19% of SAS workers who are furnished with employer-owned housing free of charge, 5% who are provided with free housing for their families, and the remaining 6% pay their employers for housing. In contrast to the pattern for other benefits, employees of farm labor contractors are more likely to live in housing provided by their employer than are workers employed by agricultural producers (50% vs. 28%).

A nominal percentage of SAS workers (4%) receive meals from their employers. Of this, 60% receive free meals and 40% pay their employer for meals. Farm labor contractors and agricultural producers are equally likely to provide meals.

Few (5%) SAS workers receive advances to cover the cost of migration to the job site at the start of the season.

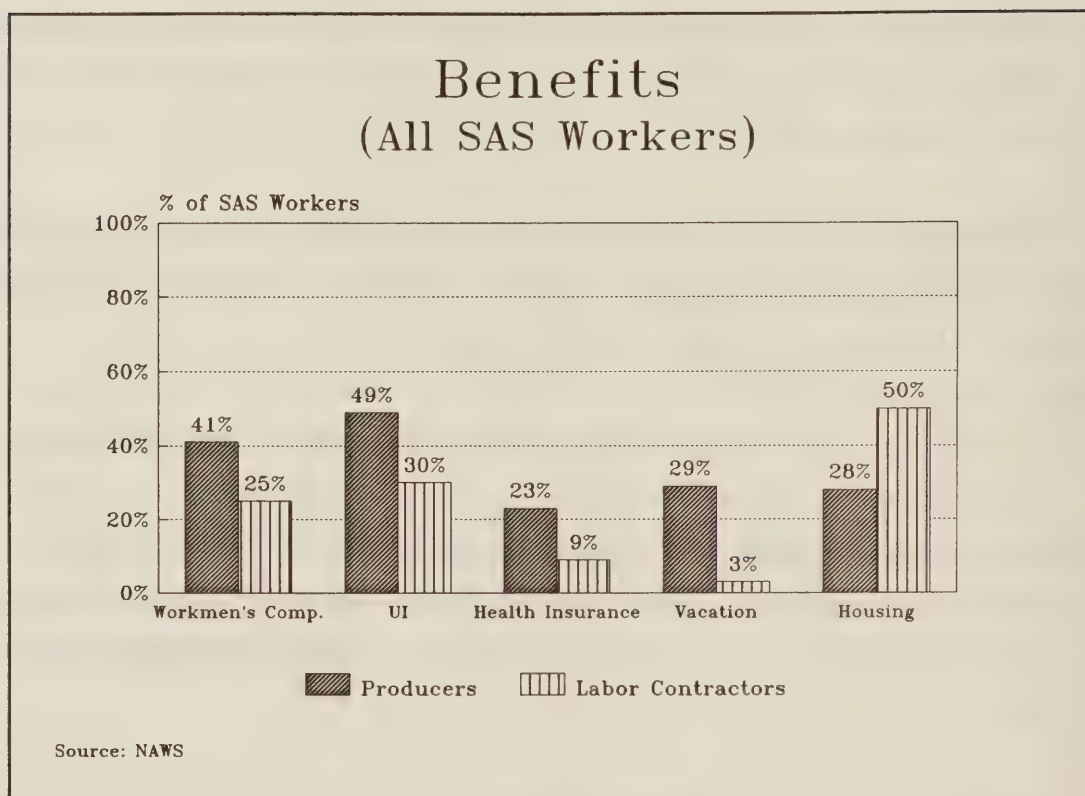


Figure 7.4 shows that most SAS workers do not receive benefits.

EQUIPMENT

Almost all (94%) SAS workers need tools to perform their jobs. Most (77%) SAS workers use employer provided tools. However, 17% of SAS workers must purchase their own tools. SAS workers hired by contractors are more likely to pay for their own tools (34%) than workers who are hired directly (15%).

SANITARY FACILITIES

Even though most workers report that sanitary facilities are available at their work sites, a significant minority (28%) of workers still lack access to basic sanitary facilities. Nineteen percent of SAS workers have no access to toilets, 8% lack access to drinking water, and 19% lack access to water for washing. Workers employed by

contractors and producers are about equally likely to have drinking water (98% and 92%, respectively). Those who work for contractors are less likely to be provided with washing water than those who work for producers (69% vs. 82%), and less likely to have access to toilets (61% vs. 84%, respectively).

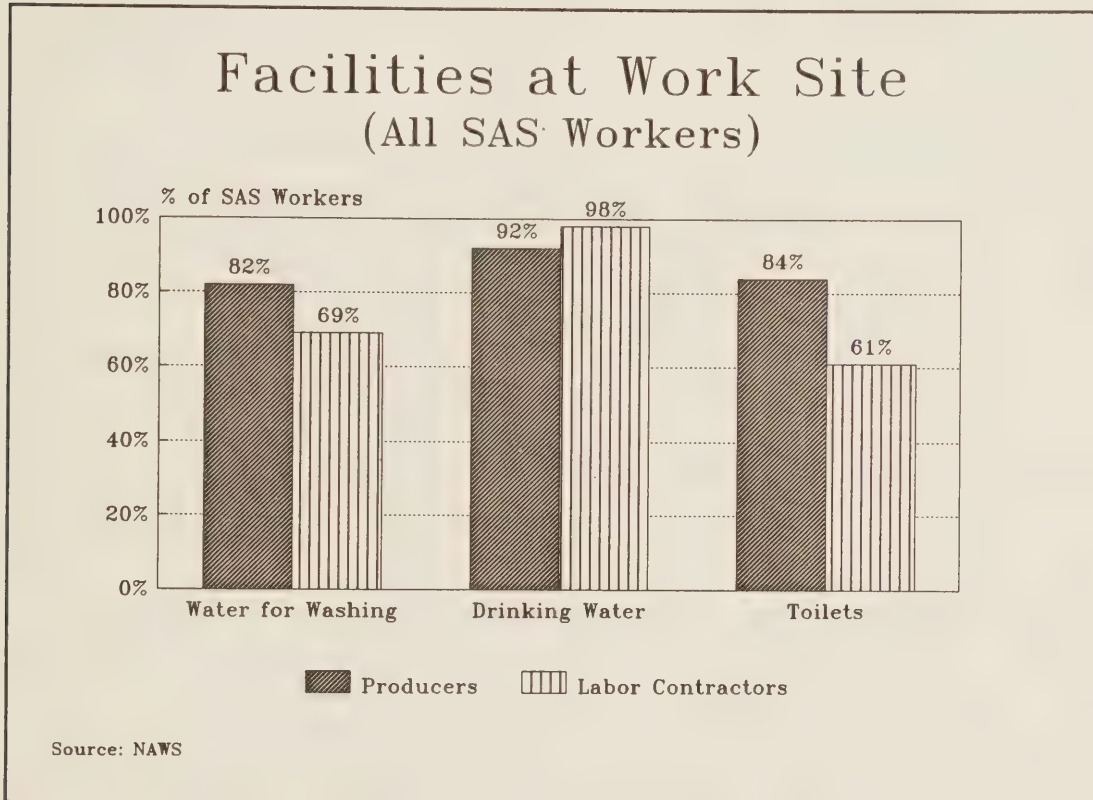


Figure 7.5 shows that sanitary facilities at the work site are not universally available to SAS workers.

CHAPTER 8

NON-SAS EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews SAS worker experience in non-SAS work. It covers time spent in non-SAS employment, characteristics of SAS workers who perform non-SAS work, areas of non-SAS work and SAS worker attitudes toward non-SAS work.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The average SAS worker spends between one and two months per year performing non-SAS labor.
- Almost three out of every ten (29%) SAS workers performs non-SAS labor during a one-year period.
- The median wage SAS workers receive for non-SAS labor is \$4.23/hr.
- Most (72%) SAS workers who perform non-SAS work do it in the area of agricultural work, construction, mechanics, food service and manufacturing.
- SAS workers who perform non-SAS labor seem to prefer it to SAS labor.

FREQUENCY OF NON-SAS EMPLOYMENT: ALL SAS WORKERS

NAWS collects information on non-SAS employment performed in the United States. Any jobs performed abroad are not included in this analysis. On average, SAS workers spend 13% of the year in non-SAS work. About three in ten (29%) SAS workers have held a non-SAS job during a one-year period.

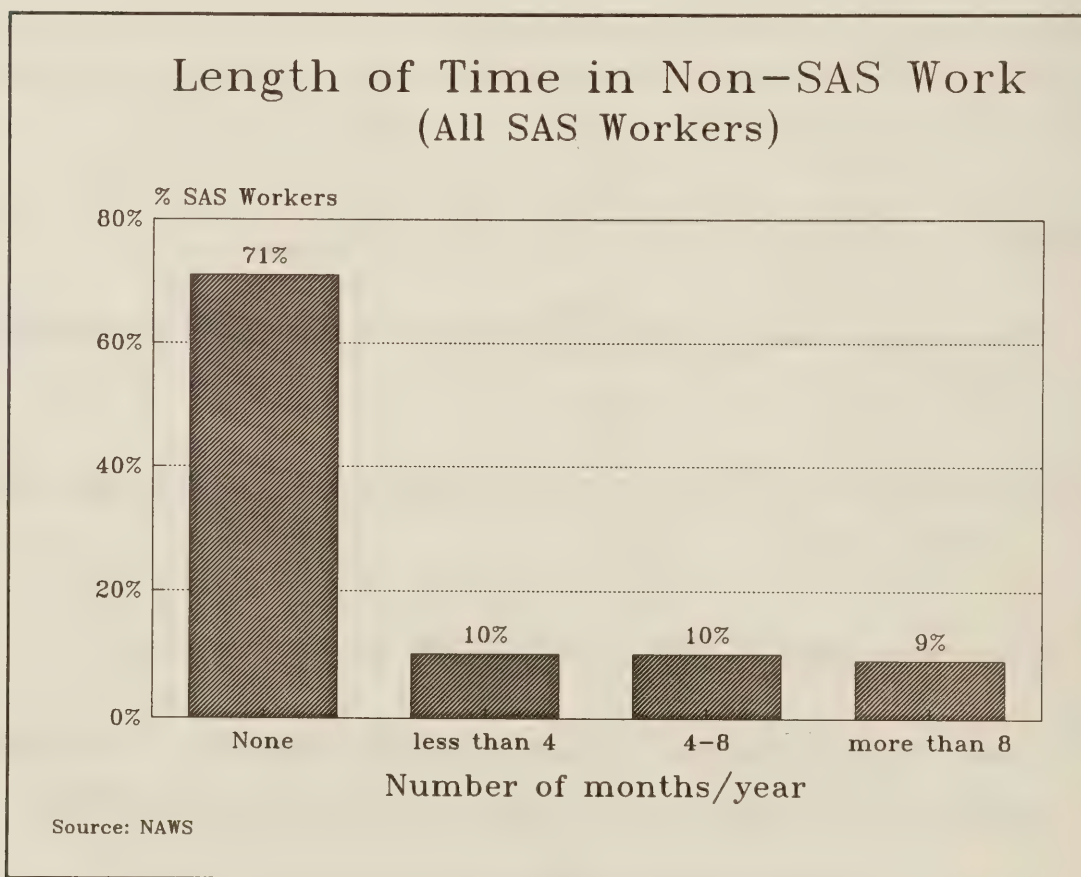


Figure 8.1 shows that most non-SAS jobs last only a few months.

Thirty-five percent of those who do non-SAS work, do so for less than four months, or one-third of the year. Thirty-six percent of SAS workers who take non-SAS jobs spend four to eight months of the year employed at these jobs. Twenty-nine percent

of SAS workers who take non-SAS jobs spend more than eight months of the year at those jobs.

DESCRIPTION OF NON-SAS EMPLOYMENT

The median wage for all non-SAS employment is \$4.23/hr. Those who take non-SAS employment have, on average, only one non-SAS employer per year, and one or two periods of non-SAS work.

The most common area of non-SAS employment is services (15% of non-SAS workers). Non-SAS agriculture (16%), construction (15%), food service (10%), manufacturing (6%) and the mechanical trades (10%) are other common areas where SAS workers find non-SAS employment.

REASONS FOR NON-SAS EMPLOYMENT

It appears that non-SAS jobs are often perceived as more desirable than SAS jobs. SAS workers rarely give up a non-SAS job in favor of a SAS job. Fewer than one-seventh (12%) of those who took non-SAS employment said they had left their non-SAS job in order to take a SAS job. This indicates that most workers do not take non-SAS jobs as a back-up job to tide them over during a slow agricultural season.

Workers see advantages in non-SAS labor as compared to SAS labor. Sixty-one percent of those who took a non-SAS job say they would like to do the same sort of work again. Of those who say they would like to take a non-SAS job again, almost two-thirds (68%) cite advantages of non-SAS work over SAS work as their reason, rather than necessity. The advantages these workers most commonly cite are: general satisfaction (cited by 17% of SAS workers who intend to take a non-SAS job), higher pay (6%), and more stable employment (10%). Workers most commonly leave non-SAS jobs due to circumstances beyond their immediate control. Almost one-third

(31%) leave their non-SAS jobs because of employer actions, i.e. they are either laid off or fired. The remaining workers leave due to non-job related factors, such as a move or family responsibilities.

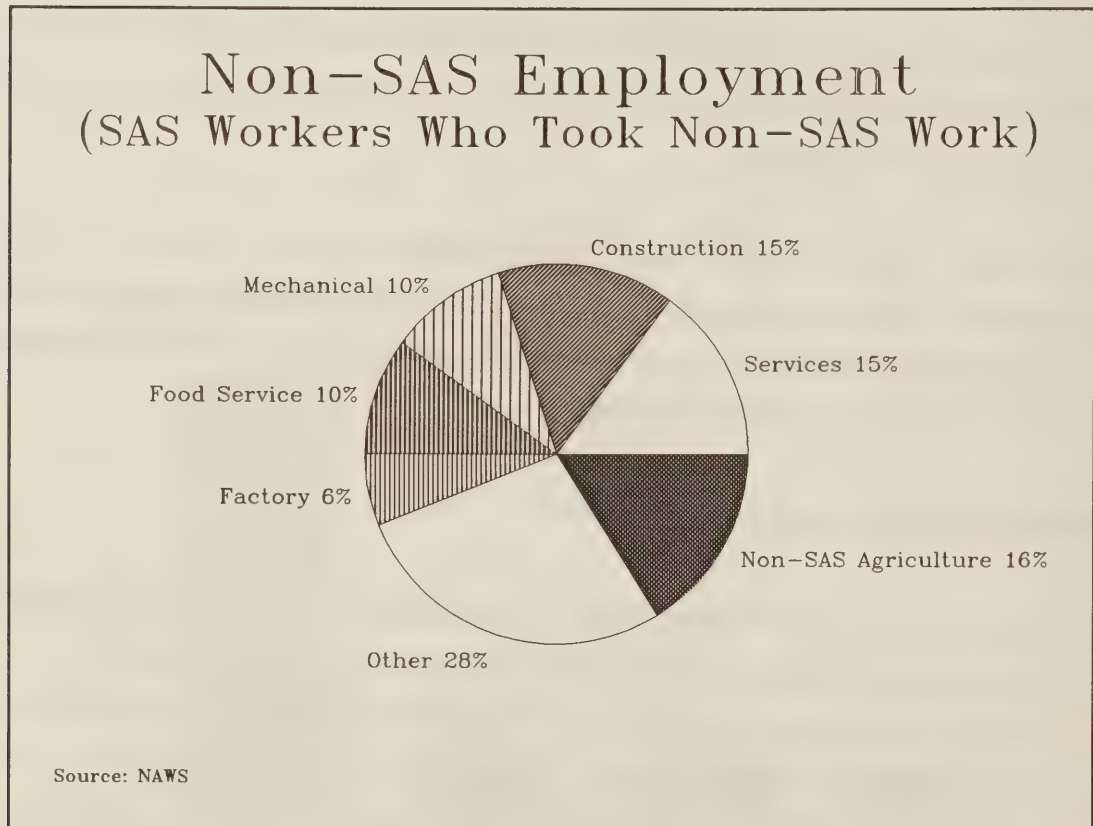


Figure 8.2 shows that non-SAS employment is concentrated in a few sectors.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO PERFORM NON-SAS WORK

SAS workers with different legal statuses have different likelihoods of participating in non-SAS work. A large minority of U.S. citizens (36%) hold non-SAS jobs during a one-year period. Other authorized workers (36%) are as likely to hold non-SAS jobs.

Permanent residents, temporary residents and undocumented workers are less likely to perform a non-SAS job (23%, 21% and 21%, respectively).

The likelihood of having performed non-SAS work varies with other demographic factors. Those born in the United States (36%) are more likely to perform non-SAS work than those born abroad (25%).

CHAPTER 9

NON-WORK PERIODS AND PERIODS SPENT ABROAD

This chapter reports on the time SAS workers spend not working in the United States. It covers the amount of time spent not working while in the United States, and the amount of time spent abroad. Each of these is analyzed for different groups of SAS workers. This chapter also covers the use of unemployment insurance and the reason SAS workers have for leaving the U.S. work force.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The majority (69%) of SAS workers do not work year-round in the United States.
- More than one-half (54%) of SAS workers spend part of the year residing in the United States without work.
- A large minority (21%) of SAS workers spend some part of the year abroad.
- Almost two-thirds (65%) of SAS workers who reside in the United States while not working do not apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits.
- Most (69%) SAS workers spend less than three months per year residing in the United States while not working, although a significant minority (14%) are without work for six months or more.

TIME SPENT NOT WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES: ALL SAS WORKERS

The NAWS collects information on the portion of the year that SAS workers did not participate in the U.S. labor force. The non-U.S. work activities are classified either as periods when the SAS worker is not working but resides in the United States (referred to as "not working while in the United States"), or as periods when the SAS worker leaves the United States (referred to as "time spent abroad"). The sum of these time periods represents the total time spent not working in the United States.

In total, 69% of all SAS workers spend part of the year either not working while in the United States (not employed and residing in the U.S), abroad (whether or not employed), or some combination of the two. Over one-half (54%) of SAS workers spend time not working while residing in the United States during one year. Twenty-one percent of SAS workers spend part of the year abroad. Seven percent do both.

Below we first analyze information for the entire SAS labor population. We then focus on the incidence of non-work periods across groups of individuals.

Most periods that SAS workers spend not working in the United States are not more than a few months long. On average, SAS workers spend roughly three months not working in the United States. This time is divided as follows: about two months not working while in the United States, and about one month abroad, either employed or not employed.

Foreign-born workers spend, on average, more time abroad than U.S.-born workers (6 weeks vs. 2 weeks), and U.S.-born workers spend more of their non-work time in the United States than foreign-born workers (12 weeks vs. 8 weeks). Women are out of work more frequently than men (18 weeks vs. 12 weeks). Single workers living with their parents spend, on average, more time out of work (18 weeks) than parents (14

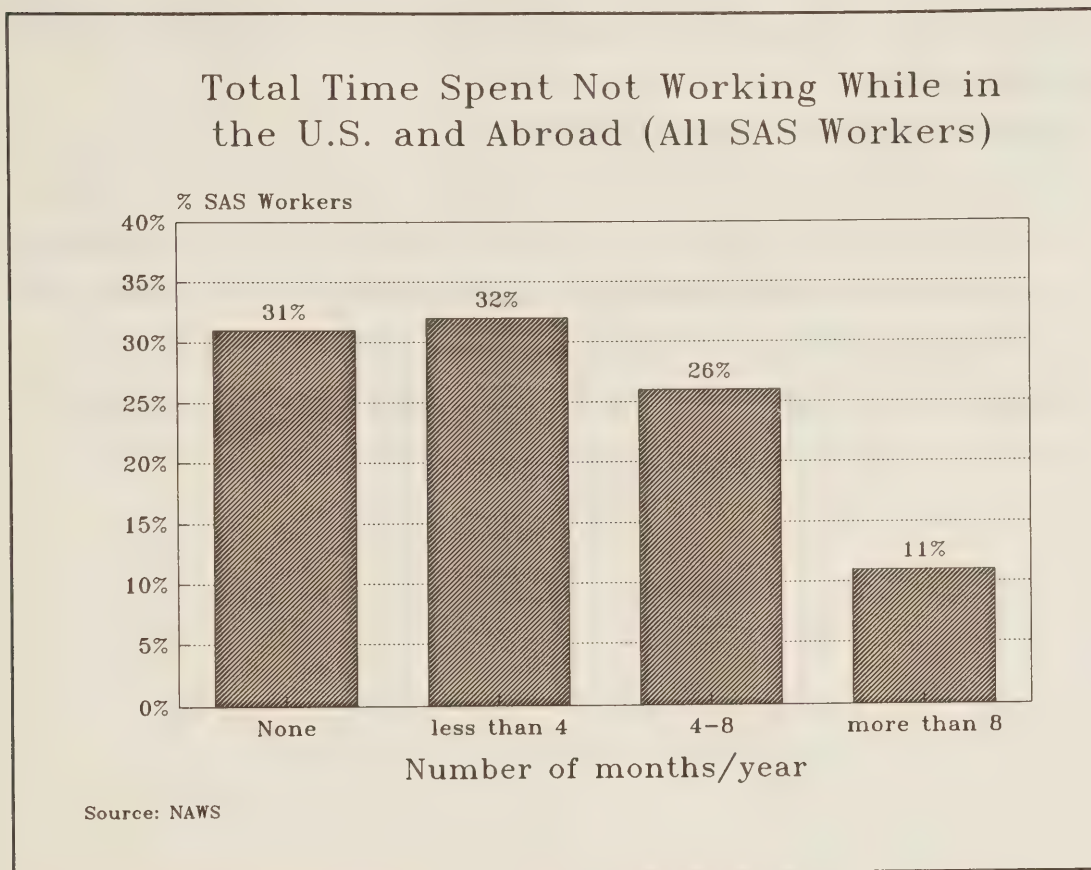


Figure 9.1 shows the total amount of time SAS workers spend not working in the United States and spend abroad.

weeks), married childless workers (12 weeks), and single workers living alone (13 weeks). Those who do not perform non-SAS labor spend more time out of work than those who perform such labor (15 weeks vs. 12 weeks).

TIME SPENT NOT WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES: SAS WORKERS WITH NON-WORK TIME

USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Of the SAS workers who spend some time during the year not working while residing in the United States, few (35%) apply for unemployment benefits. Of those who do not apply, only (7%) say it's because they do not qualify. Another 16% say that they do not know about Unemployment Insurance. Most of the remaining SAS workers who did not apply give no reason for not applying.

FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF TIME

Fifty-four percent of SAS workers are out of work for some period during the year while living in the United States. Over one-half (52%) of these workers are out of work for less than four months. A significant minority (23%) of these SAS workers, however, are out of work for eight or more months of the year.

Those who are out of work in the United States part of the year have, on average, one such spell lasting two months.

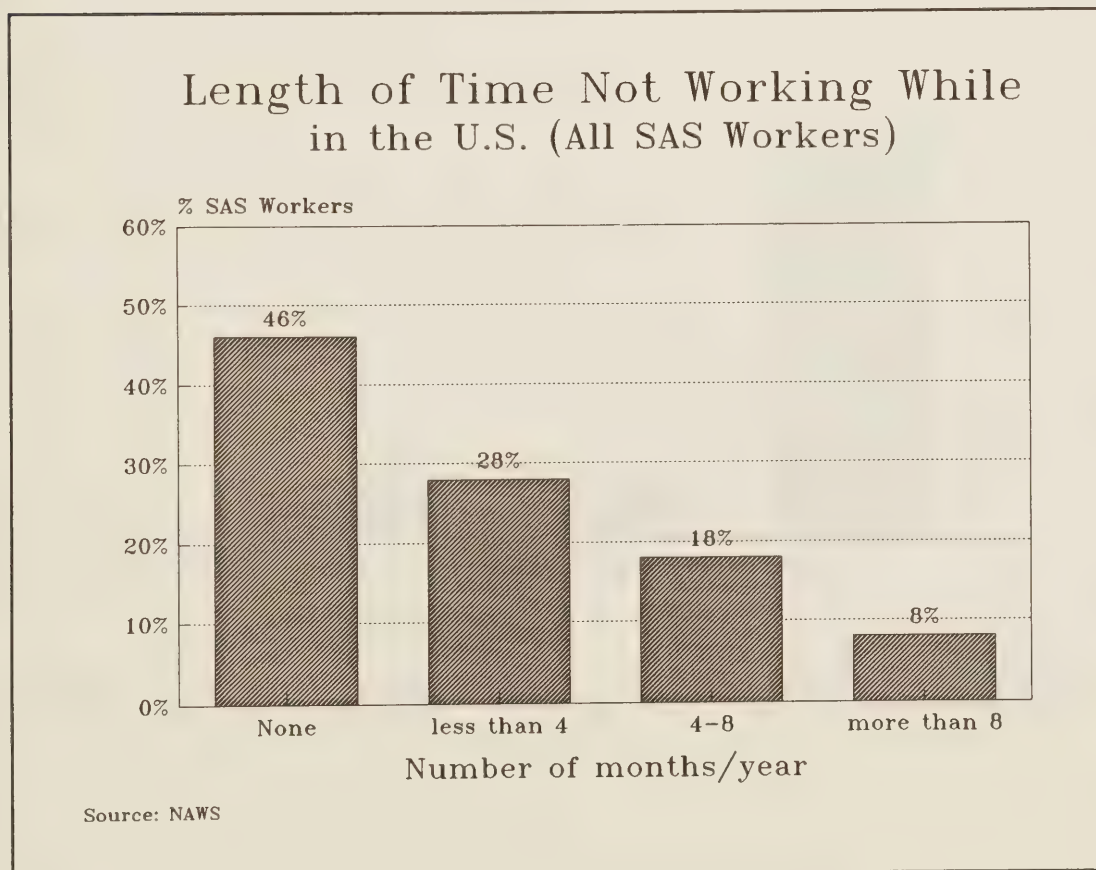


Figure 9.2 illustrates that most periods without work are of short duration.

SAS WORKERS WHO SPEND TIME ABROAD

Two out of every ten (21%) SAS workers spend time abroad during the year. Most of those who spend time abroad still reside the bulk of the year in the United States. On average, those who spend time abroad have one period abroad, and stay for an average of 19 weeks. Of those who spend time abroad almost one-half (49%), are there for less than four months.

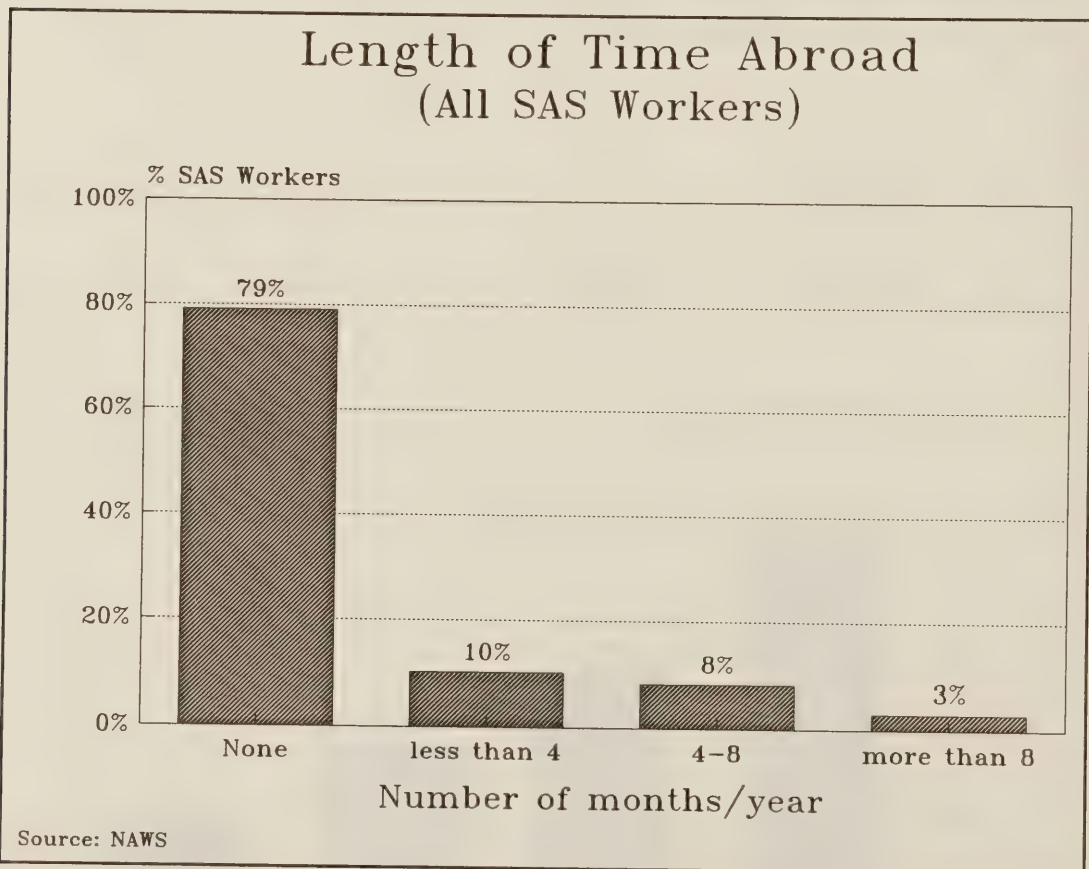


Figure 9.3 shows that SAS workers spend most of their time in the United States.

SECTION III: REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN SAS WORKERS AND SAS WORK

CHAPTER 10

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN SAS WORKER CHARACTERISTICS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports regional differences in seasonal farm workers' characteristics. It covers differences in demographic characteristics, legal status and family residence.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SAS worker characteristics vary by region.

- The Northeast (44%) and the Midwest (25%) have the lowest percentage of foreign-born SAS workers. In the rest of the country, 81% of the SAS workers are foreign-born.
- Minority workers make up more than one-half of the SAS labor force in all regions. In the Southeast, Northwest and Southwest minorities make up over 97% of the SAS work force.
- The Northeast (67%) has the highest proportion of workers living away from their families while they are doing farm work.

DEFINING THE REGIONS

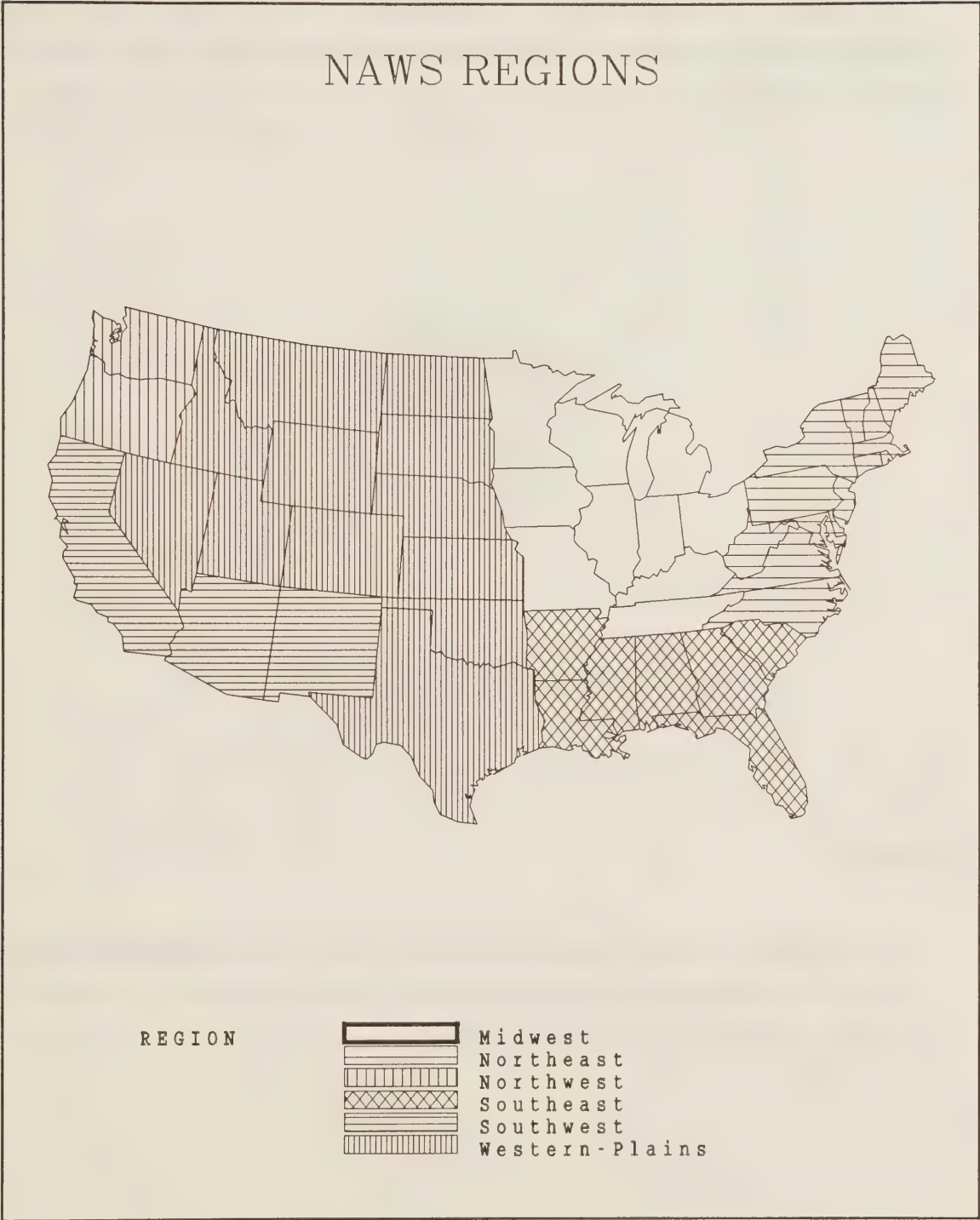
For the purposes of regional reporting, the NAWS data have been divided into six regions: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Western Plains, Pacific Northwest and Southwest. These regions are a modified set of the twelve geographic areas which are used in NAWS sampling. In turn, these twelve areas are derived from seventeen USDA defined agricultural regions. The definitions of each region are contained in Table 10.1 and illustrated in Map 3.

The proportion of data that falls in each region is pre-determined as part of the sampling and weighting process. They are based on 1989 USDA information on the number of SAS workers in each region.

TABLE 10.1 REGIONAL DEFINITIONS

REGION	NAWS STATES	USDA REGIONS
Northeast	Maine, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, North Carolina	Northeast 1 and 2, Appalachia 1
Southeast	Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana	Florida, Delta, Southeast
Midwest	Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kentucky	Lake, Corn Belt 1 and 2
Western Plains	Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Idaho	Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Mountain 1 and 2
Northwest	Washington, Oregon	Northwest
Southwest	California, Arizona	California and Mountain 3

MAP 3



The region with the most SAS workers is the Midwest (27%), followed by the Southwest (24%), Southeast (20%), the Northeast (12%), the Western Plains (9%), and the Northwest (8%).

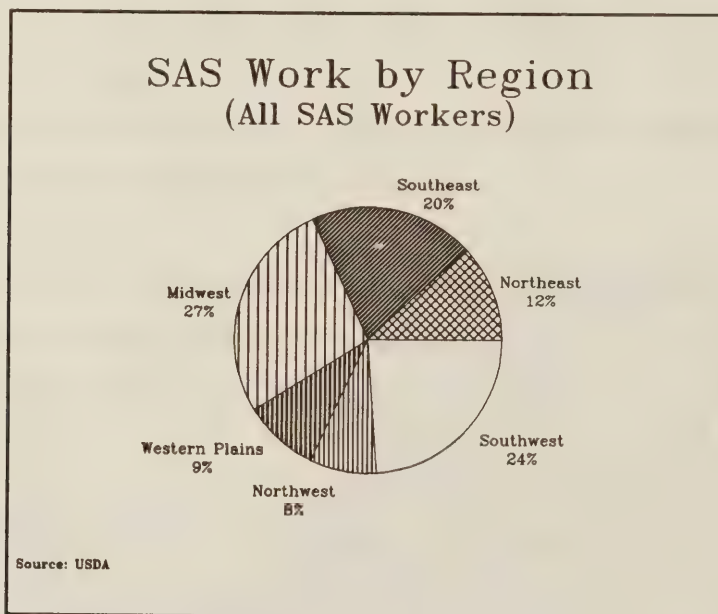


Figure 10.1 shows that the majority (51%) of SAS workers are in the Southwest and the Midwest

GENDER

The region with the largest proportion of female SAS workers is the Midwest (39%), followed by the Southwest (21%), the Southeast (20%), the Western Plains (18%), the Northwest (18%), and the Northeast (17%).

ETHNICITY AND PLACE OF BIRTH

In all regions of the United States the majority of SAS workers are foreign-born workers or U.S.-born minority workers. Almost one-half (48%) of all Midwestern SAS workers, however, are U.S.-born whites.

The highest concentrations of foreign-born SAS workers are in the Southwest (94%), Southeast (71%), and Pacific Northwest (92%). In contrast, immigrants make up only 25% of Midwestern SAS workers and 44% of Northeastern SAS workers. Sixty percent of SAS workers in the Western Plains are foreign-born.

LEGAL STATUS

The percentage of unauthorized workers is highest in the Southeast (8%) and Midwest (5%). In the rest of the country, on average, 1% to 2% of SAS workers report being without work authorization.

The Midwest has the lowest proportion (14%) of foreign-born workers who are SAWs. Elsewhere, roughly one-half of the foreign workers are SAW applicants: 59% in the Southeast, 44% in the Western Plains, 52% in the Southwest, 60% in the Northwest, and 55% in the Northeast.

FAMILY RESIDENCE

Whether or not SAS workers are accompanied by their families when performing SAS work varies by region. Midwestern and Western Plains SAS workers are most frequently accompanied by their families (69% and 71%, respectively). On the other hand, Northeastern (33%) and Southeastern (41%) SAS workers are the least likely to reside with their families while performing farm labor. In the Northwest (54%) and Southwest (64%), more than one-half of SAS workers reside with their families.

CHAPTER 11

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN SAS JOBS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers regional variations in job characteristics. It covers crop, task, patterns of employment, type of SAS employer and benefits.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SAS work varies across regions:

- The lowest percentages of field crop SAS workers are in the Northeast (1%) and Northwest (3%).
- SAS workers in fruits and nuts are most common in the Northwest (41%), Southwest (52%) and Northeast (54%).
- Vegetable SAS jobs are most common in the Southeast (36%), Midwest (32%), and Western Plains (32%).
- SAS workers in the Southwest and Northwest spend, on average, very few days (15 and 16, respectively) in non-SAS work a year. SAS workers in the Midwest spend the most days (54) in non-SAS work.
- According to respondents, SAS employers in the Southeast rarely offer workers' compensation (20%) or Unemployment Insurance (28%).

CROP

The number of SAS workers employed in different crops varies across regions. The Northeast and Northwest have the lowest percentages of SAS workers in field crops (1% and 3%, respectively). The other regions have, on average, 15% of their SAS labor force in field crops.

The Northwest, Southwest and Northeast have high percentages of fruit and nut SAS workers: 41% in the Northwest, 52% in the Southwest, and 54% in the Northeast. This compares to 9% in the rest of the country.

The Southeast, Midwest and the Western Plains have the highest percentages of SAS workers in vegetables: 36% in the Southeast, 32% in the Midwest and 32% in the Western Plains. This compares to 16% in the rest of the country.

TASK

The Midwest and the Western Plains have the highest proportions of SAS workers performing pre-harvest tasks (40% and 30%, respectively). This compares to 15% in the rest of the country.

The percentages of SAS workers harvesting can be broken down by region as follows: 47% in the Southeast, 42% in the Northeast, 35% in the Southwest, 29% in the Northwest 17%, in the Midwest and 15% in the Western Plains.

The Southeast and Northwest have the lowest percentages of workers performing post-harvest tasks (5% and 4% respectively). This compares to 13% in the rest of the country.

Semi-skilled tasks can be broken down by region as follows: 36% in the Northwest, 35% in the Southwest, 24% in the Western Plains, 17% in the Midwest, 9% in the Southeast and 8% in the Northeast.

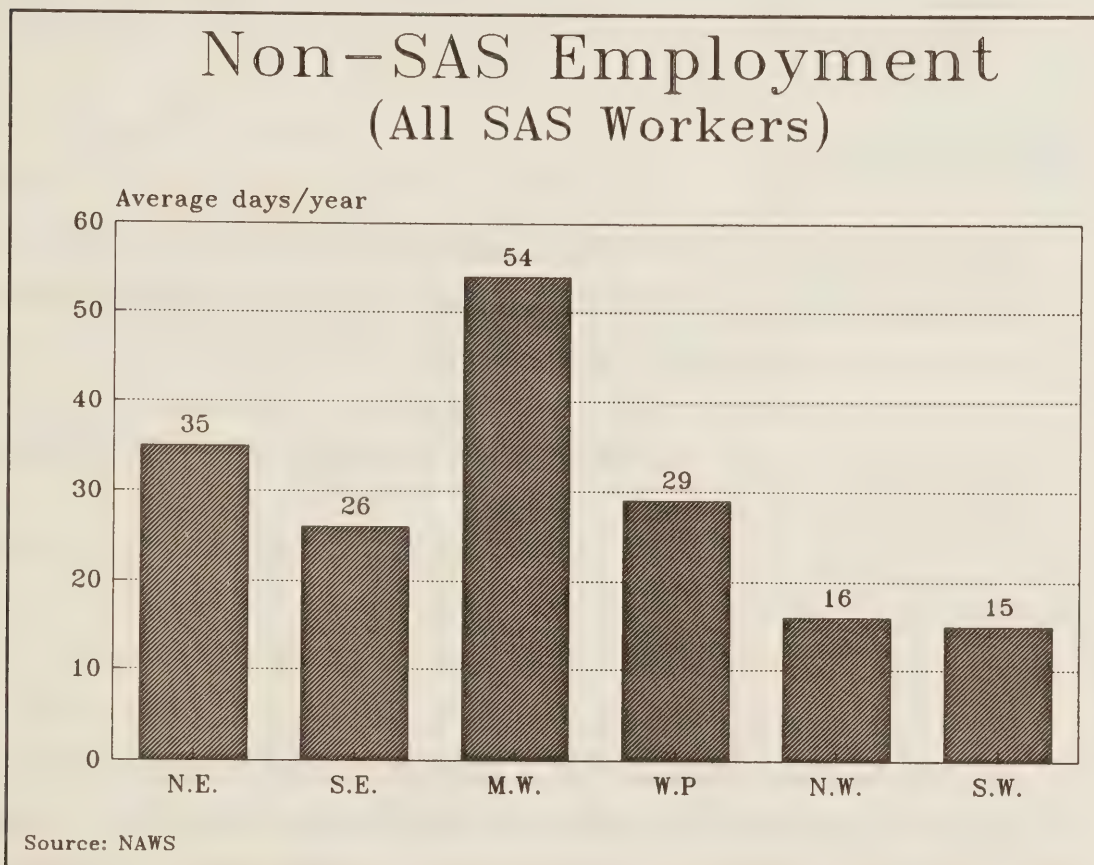


Figure 11.1 shows that SAS workers from the Midwest are more likely to spend more days in non-SAS employment than those from other regions.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

The incidence of non-working periods while in the United States does not appear to vary significantly among regions. The amount of time SAS workers dedicate to non-SAS employment, however, varies by region. Southwestern and Northwestern SAS workers rarely engage in non-SAS employment (an average of 15 and 16 days per year, respectively). SAS workers of the Midwest have the highest frequency of

non-SAS employment, an average of fifty-four days. A worker in the Northeast does an average of thirty-five days of non-SAS employment per year, a worker in the Western Plains does an average of twenty-nine days, and a worker in the Southeast, an average of twenty-six days.

TYPE OF EMPLOYER

SAS workers employed by farm labor contractors are concentrated in a few regions. The highest proportion of farm labor contractors are in the Southeast, where they employ 27% of SAS laborers. In the Southwest, 16% of SAS workers are employed by farm labor contractors, as are 9% of SAS workers in the Western Plains, and 8% in the Northeast. Fewer than 1% of workers in any of the other two regions work for farm labor contractors.

BENEFITS

Employers in the Southeast appear to offer the least benefits to SAS workers. Only 20% of the SAS workers say that they are covered by workers' compensation. In other regions, coverage is provided to between 30% and 58% of the workers. Similarly, in the Southeast, 28% of SAS workers are covered by Unemployment Insurance. SAS workers in the Southwest and Midwest (33% and 31%, respectively) have Unemployment Insurance. In the other regions, between 64% and 73% of the SAS workers have Unemployment Insurance.

APPENDIX: STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

BACKGROUND

In order to make the findings of this report accessible to a broad range of readers, the discussion of the statistical methodology was reserved for this appendix. This appendix provides information on the statistical conventions observed in this report. Further information on statistical procedures used in reporting NAWS data can be obtained by writing to Rick Mines at the address listed in the introduction.

DETERMINING THE CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

A confidence interval is an estimated range of values which has a given high probability of covering the true population value. This section provides the reader with the information necessary to calculate confidence intervals associated with reported figures.

For categorical variables, such as gender, ethnicity, and legal status, we report the proportion or percentage of workers falling into any specific category. In this situation, confidence intervals are based on the normal approximation to the binomial distribution. This method implies that, with a 99% confidence interval, reported figures vary at most three percentage points from the true value. Hence, if 75% of SAS workers are reported to fall into some category, we have 99% confidence that between 72% and 78% of the SAS workers fall in that category.

When reporting on continuous variables such as age, number of years of schooling, or wages, information is usually presented using measures of central tendency such as averages or medians. Confidence intervals for the averages of continuous variables are based on standard errors. Standard errors provide a measure of the variability of the average value in repeated random samples from the same population. Small standard errors mean that

the average would not vary much in repeated samples and large standard errors indicate that the average has greater variance. A 99% confidence interval for any sample average contains values within roughly three times the standard error in either direction. For example, for a variable with a reported average of 31 and a standard error of 1, we are 99% confident that the population average falls between 28 and 34.

Table A.1 contains all the continuous variables in the report. It provides the means for the SAS worker population, the standard errors and the range with 99% probability of covering the true population value.

Table A.1 Confidence Intervals for Continuous Variables

Variable	Average	Standard Error	99% Confidence Interval
Age	32.33	.25	31.58 - 33.08
Highest Grade	7.78	.10	7.45 - 8.05
Number of Children (under 15)	1.15	.03	1.06 - 1.24
Number of Children in Household	.74	.03	.65 - .83
Number of Family Household Members	2.09	.03	2.00 - 2.18
Number of SAS Workers in Household	.94	.03	.85 - 1.03
Number of Non-SAS Workers in Household	.33	.02	.27 - .39
Number of Non-Family Household Members	.59	.03	.50 - .68
Number of People in Household	3.40	.04	3.28 - 3.52
SAS Wage (hourly)	\$5.03	\$.04	\$4.91 - \$5.15
Weeks per Year Spent Abroad	4.02	.20	3.42 - 4.62
Weeks per Year Spent in Non-SAS Work	7.05	.28	6.21 - 7.89
Weeks per Year Spent Not Working in the United States	9.85	.28	9.01 - 10.69
Weeks per Year Spent in SAS Work	31.07	.36	29.99 - 32.15
Years in the United States (foreign-born only)	6.53	.18	5.99 - 7.07

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS OF SAS WORKERS

All reported differences in averages or proportions for different groups of SAS workers are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. Differences between continuous variables, including differences that are reported through medians, were verified using the t-test of means. Relationships among categorical variables were checked using the Pearson Chi-Square test.

It should be noted that the Chi-Square test checks for distributional differences in the value being analyzed among all groups in the test. It should not be assumed that every group is significantly different from every other group.

In order to minimize the complexity of the report, statistical tests that resulted in insignificant differences (at the $p < .05$ level) or that were inconclusive are not mentioned in the text.

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